PRINTED BY
WYNKOOP, HALLENBECK & CO.,
NEW YORK, U. S. A.

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS



SOMETIMES CALLED

BY ORDER OF THE KING

In Uniform Style.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS'S THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.		5 VOLS.
EUGENE SUE'S THE WANDERING JEW. .	.	3 VOLS.
VICTOR HUGO'S LES MISERABLES.	. . . .	5 VOLS.
" " TOILERS OF THE SEA.	. . .	2 VOLS.
" " NÔTRE-DAME. .	. . .	2 VOLS.
" " THE MAN WHO LAUGHS.	. . .	2 VOLS.
" " NINETY-THREE.	. .	2 VOLS.

Other works in preparation

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS.

LONDON AND NEW-YORK.

BY

VICTOR HUGO

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DESIGNS BY D. VIERGE AND G. ROCHEGROSSE

VOL.

LONDON AND NEW-YORK

1889

By the Same Author.
In Uniform Style.

LES MISÉRABLES, ...	5 VOLS.
TOILERS OF THE SEA, . . .	2 VOLS.
NÔTRE-DAME, ...	2 VOLS.
THE MAN WHO LAUGHS, .	2 VOLS.
NINETY-THREE, ...	2 VOLS.

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS,
LONDON AND NEW-YORK.

Copyright, 1888, by JOSEPH L. BLAMIRE.



THE MAN WHO LAUGHS.

PREFACE

In England, everything is great, even what is not good, even Oligarchy. The English Patriciate is the patriciate in the absolute sense of the word. No more illustrious, more terrible, or more vigorous feudality exists. Let us add that this feudality has been useful at times. It is in England that the phenomenon of Seigneurie must be studied, as in France the phenomenon of Royalty must be studied.

The true title of this book should be *Aristocracy*. Another book that will follow may, perhaps, be entitled *Monarchy*. These two books, if it is given to the author to finish his task, will precede and introduce another, to be called *Ninety-Three*.

Hauteville House, 1869.



"THE COMPRACHICOS AT WORK."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I

PART I
THE SEA AND THE NIGHT

I
TWO PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

BOOK III—THE CHILD IN THE SHADOW

PART II

BY ORDER OF THE KING

BOOK I—THE EVERLASTING PRESENCE OF THE PAST—MAN REFLECTS MAN

BOOK II—GWYNPLAINE AND DEA

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I



JOSIANA.

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

PART I

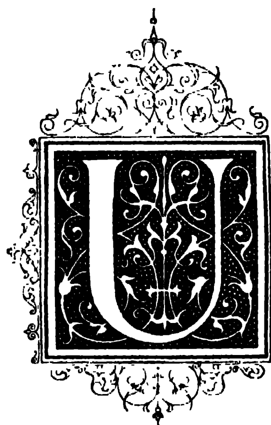
THE SEA AND THE NIGHT

I

TWO PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

URSUS

I



RSUS and Homo were fast friends. Ursus was a man, Homo a wolf. Their dispositions tallied. It was the man who had christened the wolf: probably he had also chosen his own name. Having found *Ursus* fit for himself, he had found *Homo* fit for the beast. Man and wolf turned their partnership to account at fairs, at village fêtes, at the corners of streets where passers-by throng, and out of the need which people seem to feel everywhere to listen to idle gossip, and to buy quack medicine. The wolf, gentle and courteously subordinate, diverted the crowd. It is a pleasant thing to behold the tameness of animals. Our greatest delight is to see all the varieties of domestication parade before us. This it is which collects so many folks on the road of royal processions.

Ursus and Homo went about from cross-road to cross-road, from the High Street of Aberystwith to the High Street of Jedburgh, from

country-side to country-side, from shire to shire, from town to town. One market exhausted, they went on to another. Ursus lived in a small van upon wheels, which Homo was civilized enough to draw by day and guard by night. On bad roads, up hills, and where there were too many ruts, or there was too much mud, the man buckled the trace round his neck and pulled fraternally, side by side, with the wolf. They had thus grown old together. They encamped at hap-hazard on a common, in the glade of a wood, on the waste patch of grass where roads intersect, at the outskirts of villages, at the gates of towns, in market-places, in public walks, on the borders of parks, before the entrances of churches. When the cart drew up on a fair green, when the gossips ran up open-mouthed and the curious made a circle round the pair, Ursus harangued and Homo approved. Homo, with a bowl in his mouth, politely made a collection among the audience. They gained their livelihood. The wolf was lettered, likewise the man. The wolf had been trained by the man, or had trained himself unassisted, to divers wolfish arts, which swelled the receipts. "Above all things, do not degenerate into a man," his friend would say to him.

Never did the wolf bite: the man did now and then. At least, to bite was the intent of Ursus. He was a misanthrope, and to italicize his misanthropy he had made himself a juggler. To live, also; for the stomach has to be consulted. Moreover, this juggler-misanthrope, whether to add to the complexity of his being or to perfect it, was a doctor. To be a doctor is little: Ursus was a ventriloquist. You heard him speak without his moving his lips. He counterfeited, so as to deceive you, any one's accent or pronunciation. He imitated voices so exactly that you believed you heard the people themselves. All alone he simulated the murmur of a crowd, and this gave him a right to the title of Engastrimythos, which he took. He reproduced all sorts of cries of birds, as of the thrush, the wren, the pipit lark, otherwise called the grey cheeper, and the ring ousel, all travelers like himself: so that at times when the fancy struck him, he made you aware either of a public thoroughfare filled with the uproar of men, or of a meadow loud with the voices of beasts—at one time stormy as a multitude, at another fresh and serene as the dawn. Such gifts, although rare, exist. In the last century a man called Touzel, who imitated the mingled utterances of men and animals, and who counterfeited all the cries of beasts, was attached to the person of Buffon—to serve as a menagerie.

Ursus was sagacious, contradictory, odd, and inclined to the singular expositions which we term fables. He had the appearance of believing in them, and this impudence was a part of his humor. He read people's hands, opened books at random and drew conclusions, told



URSUS AND HOMO.

fortunes, taught that it is perilous to meet a black mare, still more perilous, as you start for a journey, to hear yourself accosted by one who knows not whither you are going; and he called himself a dealer in superstitions. He used to say: "There is one difference between me and the Archbishop of Canterbury: I avow what I am." Hence it was that the archbishop, justly indignant, had him one day before him; but Ursus cleverly disarmed his grace by reciting a sermon he had composed upon Christmas-day, which the delighted archbishop learnt by heart, and delivered from the pulpit as his own. In consideration thereof the archbishop pardoned Ursus.

As a doctor, Ursus wrought cures by some means or other. He made use of aromatics; he was versed in simples; he made the most of the immense power which lies in a heap of neglected plants, such as the hazel, the catkin, the white alder, the white briony, the mealy-tree, the traveler's joy, the buckthorn. He treated phthisis with the sundew; at opportune moments he would use the leaves of the spurge, which plucked at the bottom are a purgative and plucked at the top, an emetic. He cured sore throat by means of the vegetable excrescence called Jew's ear. He knew the rush which cures the ox and the mint which cures the horse. He was well acquainted with the beauties and virtues of the herb mandragora, which, as every one knows, is of both sexes. He had many recipes. He cured burns with the salamander wool, of which, according to Pliny, Nero had a napkin. Ursus possessed a retort and a flask; he effected transmutations; he sold panaceas. It was said of him that he had once been for a short time in Bedlam; they had done him the honor to take him for a madman, but had set him free on discovering that he was only a poet. This story was probably not true; we have all to submit to some such legend about us.

The fact is, Ursus was a bit of a savant, a man of taste, and an old Latin poet. He was learned in two forms; he Hippocratized and he Pindarized. He could have vied in bombast with Rapin and Vida. He could have composed Jesuit tragedies in a style not less triumphant than that of father Bouhours. It followed from his familiarity with the venerable rhythms and metres of the ancients, that he had peculiar figures of speech, and a whole family of classical metaphors. He would say of a mother followed by her two daughters, *There is a dactyl;* of a father preceded by his two sons, *There is an anapæst;* and of a little child walking between its grandmother and grandfather, *There is an amphimacer.* So much knowledge could only end in starvation. The school of Salerno says, "Eat little and often." Ursus ate little and seldom, thus obeying one half the precept and disobeying the other; but

this was the fault of the public, who did not always flock to him, and who did not often buy.

Ursus was wont to say: "The expectoration of a sentence is a relief. The wolf is comforted by its howl, the sheep by its wool, the forest by its finch, woman by her love, and the philosopher by his epiphonema." Ursus at a pinch composed comedies, which, in recital, he all but acted; this helped to sell the drugs. Among other works, he had composed an heroic pastoral in honor of Sir Hugh Middleton, who in 1608 brought a river to London. The river was lying peacefully in Hertfordshire, twenty miles from London: the knight came and took possession of it. He brought a brigade of six hundred men, armed with shovels and pickaxes; set to breaking up the ground, scooping it out in one place, raising it in another—now thirty feet high, now twenty feet deep; made wooden aqueducts high in air; and at different points constructed eight hundred bridges of stone, bricks, and timber. One fine morning the river entered London, which was short of water. Ursus transformed all these vulgar details into a fine Eclogue between the Thames and the New River, in which the former invited the latter to come to him, and offered her his bed, saying, "I am too old to please women, but I am rich enough to pay them,"—an ingenious and gallant conceit to indicate how Sir Hugh Middleton had completed the work at his own expense.

Ursus was great in soliloquy. Of a disposition at once unsociable and talkative, desiring to see no one, yet wishing to converse with some one, he got out of the difficulty by talking to himself. Any one who has lived a solitary life knows how deeply seated monologue is in one's nature. Speech imprisoned frets to find a vent. To harangue space is an outlet. To speak out aloud when alone is as it were to have a dialogue with the divinity which is within. It was, as is well known, a custom of Socrates; he declaimed to himself. Luther did the same. Ursus took after those great men. He had the hermaphrodite faculty of being his own audience. He questioned himself, answered himself, praised himself, blamed himself. You heard him in the street soliloquizing in his van. The passers-by, who have their own way of appreciating clever people, used to say: He is an idiot. As we have just observed, he abused himself at times; but there were times also when he rendered himself justice. One day, in one of these allocutions addressed to himself, he was heard to cry out, "I have studied vegetation in all its mysteries—in the stalk, in the bud, in the sepal, in the stamen, in the carpel, in the ovule, in the spore, in the theca, and in the apothecium. I have thoroughly sifted chromatics, osmosy, and chymosy; that is to say, the formation of colors, of smell, and of taste."

There was something fatuous, doubtless, in this certificate which Ursus gave to Ursus; but let those who have not thoroughly sifted chromatics, osmosy, and chymosy cast the first stone at him.

Fortunately Ursus had never gone into the Low Countries; there they would certainly have weighed him, to ascertain whether he was of



the normal weight, above or below which a man is a sorcerer. In Holland this weight was sagely fixed by law. Nothing was simpler or more ingenious. It was a clear test. They put you in a scale, and the evidence was conclusive if you broke the equilibrium. Too heavy, you were hanged; too light, you were burned. To this day the scales in which sorcerers were weighed may be seen at Oudewater, but they are now used for weighing cheeses; how religion has degenerated! Ursus

would certainly have had a crow to pluck with those scales. In his travels he kept away from Holland, and he did well. Indeed, we believed that he used never to leave Great Britain.

However this may have been, he was very poor and morose, and having made the acquaintance of Homo in a wood, a taste for a wandering life had come over him. He had taken the wolf into partnership, and with him had gone forth on the highways, living in the open air the great life of chance. He had a great deal of industry and of reserve, and great skill in everything connected with healing operations, restoring the sick to health, and in working wonders peculiar to himself. He was considered a clever mountebank and a good doctor. As may be imagined, he passed for a wizard as well,—not much indeed; only a little, for it was unwholesome in those days to be considered a friend of the devil. To tell the truth, Ursus, by his passion for pharmacy and his love of plants, laid himself open to suspicion, seeing that he often went to gather herbs in rough thickets where grew Lucifer's salads, and where, as has been proved by the Counselor De l'Ancre, there is a risk of meeting in the evening mist a man who comes out of the earth, "blind of the right eye, bare-footed, without a cloak, and a sword by his side." But for the matter of that, Ursus, although eccentric in manner and disposition, was too good a fellow to invoke or disperse hail, to make faces appear, to kill a man with the torment of excessive dancing, to suggest dreams fair or foul and full of terror, and to cause the birth of cocks with four wings. He had no such mischievous tricks. He was incapable of certain abominations, such as, for instance, speaking German, Hebrew, or Greek, without having learned them, which is a sign of unpardonable wickedness, or of a natural infirmity proceeding from a morbid humor. If Ursus spoke Latin, it was because he knew it. He would never have allowed himself to speak Syriac, which he did not know. Besides, it is asserted that Syriac is the language spoken in the midnight meetings at which uncanny people worship the devil. In medicine he justly preferred Galen to Cardan; Cardan, although a learned man, being but an earthworm to Galen.

To sum up, Ursus was not one of those persons who live in fear of the police. His van was long enough and wide enough to allow of his lying down in it on a box containing his not very sumptuous apparel. He owned a lantern, several wigs, and some utensils suspended from nails, among which were musical instruments. He possessed, besides, a bearskin with which he covered himself on his days of grand performance. He called this putting on full dress. He used to say, "I have two skins; this is the real one," pointing to the bearskin.

The little house on wheels belonged to himself and to the wolf.

Besides his house, his retort, and his wolf, he had a flute and a violoncello on which he played prettily. He concocted his own elixirs. His wits yielded him enough to sup on sometimes. In the top of his van was a hole, through which passed the pipe of a cast-iron stove; so close



to his box as to scorch the wood of it. The stove had two compartments; in one of them Ursus cooked his chemicals, and in the other his potatoes. At night the wolf slept under the van, amicably secured by a chain. Homo's hair was black, that of Ursus, gray; Ursus was fifty, unless, indeed, he was sixty. He accepted his destiny, to such an extent that, as we have just seen, he ate potatoes, the trash on which at that time they fed pigs and convicts. He ate them indignant, but

resigned. He was not tall—he was long. He was bent and melancholy. The bowed frame of an old man is the settlement in the architecture of life. Nature had formed him for sadness. He found it difficult to smile, and he had never been able to weep, so that he was deprived of the consolation of tears, as well as of the palliative of joy. An old man is a thinking ruin; and such a ruin was Ursus. He had the loquacity of a charlatan, the leanness of a prophet, the irascibility of a charged mine; such was Ursus. In his youth he had been a philosopher in the house of a lord.

This was a hundred and eighty years ago, when men were more like wolves than they are now.

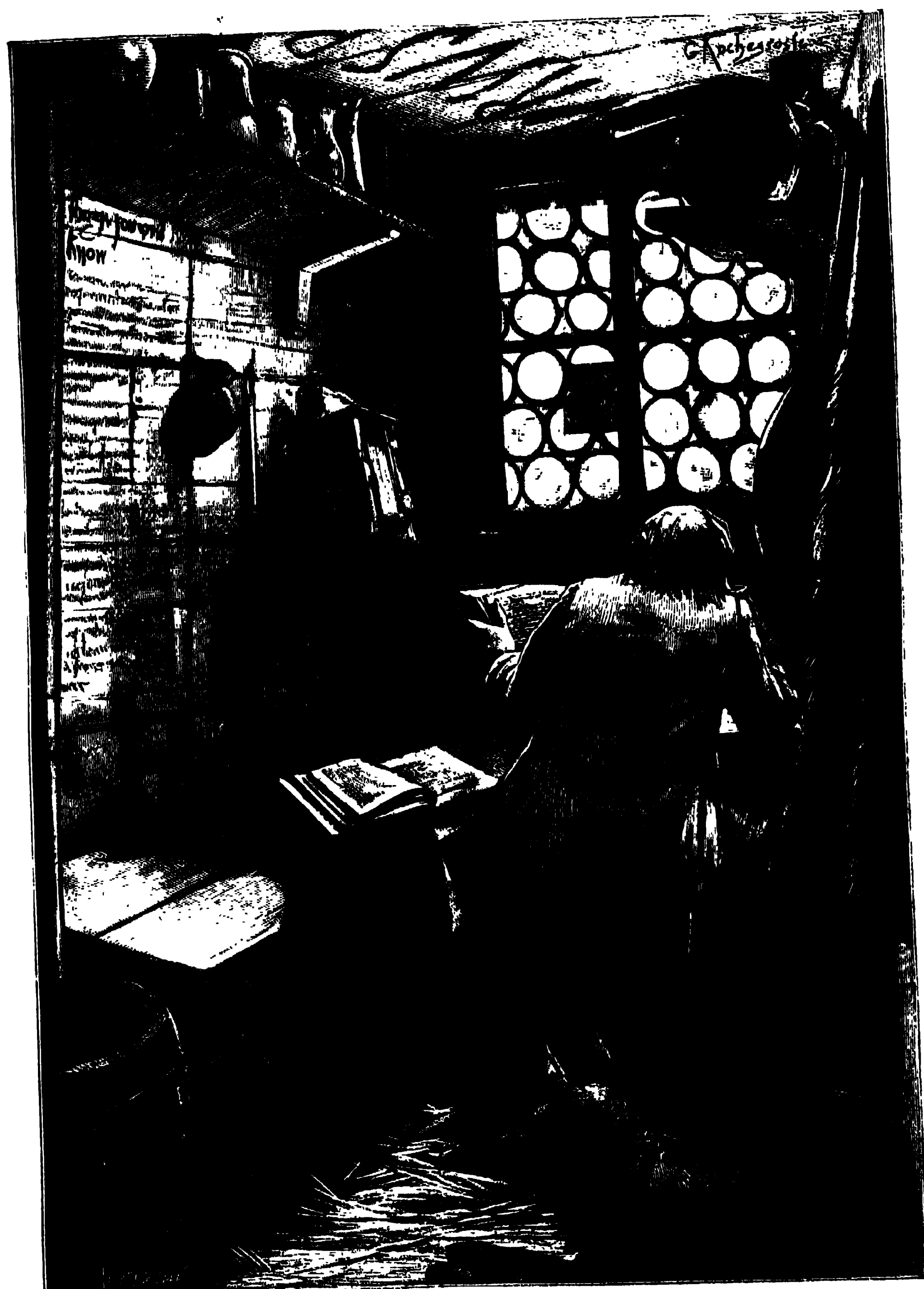
Not so very much though.

II

HOMO was no ordinary wolf. From his appetite for medlars and potatoes he might have been taken for a prairie wolf; from his dark hide, for a lycaon; and from his howl prolonged into a bark, for a dog of Chili. But no one has as yet observed the eyeball of a dog of Chili sufficiently to enable us to determine whether he be not a fox, and Homo was a real wolf. He was five feet long, which is a fine length for a wolf, even in Lithuania; he was very strong; he looked at you askance, which was not his fault; he had a soft tongue, with which he occasionally licked Ursus; he had a narrow brush of short bristles on his backbone, and he was lean with the wholesome leanness of a forest life. Before he knew Ursus and had a carriage to draw, he thought nothing of doing his fifty miles a night. Ursus meeting him in a thicket near a stream of running water, had conceived a high opinion of him from seeing the skill and sagacity with which he fished out crayfish, and welcomed him as an honest and genuine Koupara wolf of the kind called crab-eater.

As a beast of burden, Ursus preferred Homo to a donkey. He would have felt repugnance to having his hut drawn by an ass; he thought too highly of the ass for that. Moreover, he had observed that the ass, a four-legged thinker little understood by men, has a habit of cocking his ears uneasily when philosophers talk nonsense. In life the ass is a third person between our thoughts and ourselves, and acts as a restraint. As a friend, Ursus preferred Homo to a dog, considering that the love of a wolf is more rare.

Hence it was that Homo sufficed for Ursus. Homo was for Ursus more than a companion, he was an analogue. Ursus used to pat the wolf's empty ribs, saying: "I have found the second volume of myself!"



THE INTERIOR OF THE VAN.

Again he said, "When I am dead, any one wishing to know me need only study Homo. I shall leave him as a true copy behind me."

The English law, not very lenient to beasts of the forest, might have picked a quarrel with the wolf, and have put him to trouble for his assurance in going freely about the towns: but Homo took advantage of the immunity granted by a statute of Edward IV. to servants: "*Every servant in attendance on his master is free to come and go.*" Besides, a certain relaxation of the law had resulted with regard to wolves, in consequence of its being the fashion of the ladies of the Court, under the later Stuarts, to have, instead of dogs, little wolves, called adives, about the size of cats, which were brought from Asia at great cost.

Ursus had communicated to Homo a portion of his talents: such as to stand upright, to restrain his rage into sulkiness, to growl instead of howling, etc.; and on his part, the wolf had taught the man what *he* knew—to do without a roof, without bread and fire, to prefer hunger in the woods to slavery in a palace.

The van, hut, and vehicle in one, which traversed so many different roads, without, however, leaving Great Britain, had four wheels, with shafts for the wolf and a splinter-bar for the man. The splinter-bar came into use when the roads were bad. The van was strong, although it was built of light boards like a dove-cot. In front there was a glass door with a little balcony used for orations, which had something of the character of the platform tempered by an air of the pulpit. At the back there was a door with a practicable panel. By lowering the three steps which turned on a hinge below the door, access was gained to the hut, which at night was securely fastened with bolt and lock. Rain and snow had fallen plentifully on it; it had been painted, but of what color it was difficult to say, change of season being to vans what changes of reign are to courtiers. In front, outside, was a board—a kind of frontispiece, on which the following inscription might once have been deciphered; it was in black letters on a white ground, but by degrees the characters had become confused and blurred:

"By friction gold loses every year a fourteen hundredth part of its bulk. This is what is called the Wear. Hence it follows that on fourteen hundred millions of gold in circulation throughout the world, one million is lost annually. This million dissolves into dust, flies away, floats about, is reduced to atoms, charges, drugs, weighs down consciences, amalgamates with the souls of the rich whom it renders proud, and with those of the poor whom it renders brutish."

The inscription, rubbed and blotted by the rain and by the kindness of nature, was fortunately illegible, for it is possible that its philosophy

concerning the inhalation of gold, at the same time both enigmatical and lucid, might not have been to the taste of the sheriffs, the provost-marshals, and other big-wigs of the law. English legislation did not trifle in those days. It did not take much to make a man a felon. The magistrates were ferocious by tradition, and cruelty was a matter of routine. The judges of assize increased and multiplied. Jefferies had become a breeder of whelps.

III

In the interior of the van there were two other inscriptions. Above the box, on a white-washed plank, a hand had written in ink as follows:

"The Only Things Necessary to Know.

"The Baron, peer of England, wears a cap with six pearls. The coronet begins with the rank of Viscount. The Viscount wears a coronet of which the pearls are without number. The Earl, a coronet with the pearls upon points, mingled with strawberry leaves placed low between. The Marquis, one with pearls and leaves on the same level. The Duke, one with strawberry leaves alone—no pearls. The Royal Duke, a circlet of crosses and fleurs-de-lys. The Prince of Wales, crown like that of the King, but unclosed.

"The Duke is *most high and most puissant prince*, the Marquis and Earl *most noble and puissant lord*, the Viscount *noble and puissant lord*, the Baron *trusty lord*. The Duke is his *Grace*; the other Peers their *Lordships*. *Most honorable* is higher than *right honorable*.

"Lords who are peers are lords in their own right. Lords who are not peers are lords by courtesy:—there are no real lords, excepting such as are peers.

"The House of Lords is a chamber and a court, *Concilium et Curia*, legislature and court of justice. The Commons, who are the people, when ordered to the bar of the Lords, humbly present themselves bareheaded before the peers, who remain covered. The Commons send up their bills by forty members, who present the bill with three low bows. The Lords send their bills to the Commons by a mere clerk. In case of disagreement, the two Houses confer in the Painted Chamber, the Peers seated and covered, the Commons standing and bareheaded.

"Peers go to parliament in their coaches in file; the Commons do not. Some peers go to Westminster in open four-wheeled chariots. The use of these and of coaches emblazoned with coats of arms and coronets is allowed only to peers, and forms a portion of their dignity.

"Barons have the same rank as bishops. To be a baron peer of England, it is necessary to be in possession of a tenure from the king *per Baroniam integram*, by full barony. The full barony consists of thirteen knights' fees and one third part, each knight's fee being of the value of 20*l.* sterling, which makes in all 400 marks. The head of a barony (*Caput baroniæ*) is a castle disposed by inheritance, as England herself, that is to say, descending to daughters if there be no sons, and in that case going to the eldest daughter, *cæteris filiabus aliundè satisfactis*.*

"Barons have the degree of lord: in Saxon, *laford; dominus* in high Latin; *Lordus* in low Latin. The eldest and younger sons of viscounts and barons are the first esquires in the kingdom. The eldest sons of peers take precedence of knights of the garter. The younger sons do not. The eldest son of a viscount comes after all barons, and precedes all baronets. Every daughter of a peer is a *Lady*. Other English girls are plain *Mistress*.

"All judges rank below peers. The serjeant wears a lambskin tippet; the judge one of vair, *de minuto vario*, made up of a variety of little white furs, always excepting ermine. Ermine is reserved for peers and the king.

"A lord never takes an oath, either to the crown or the law. His word suffices; he says, *Upon my honor*.

"By a law of Edward the Sixth, peers have the privilege of committing manslaughter. A peer who kills a man without premeditation is not prosecuted.

"The persons of peers are inviolable.

"A peer cannot be held in durance, save in the Tower of London.

"A writ of supplicavit cannot be granted against a peer.

"A peer sent for by the king has the right to kill one or two deer in the royal park.

"A peer holds in his castle a baron's court of justice.

"It is unworthy of a peer to walk the street in a cloak, followed by two footmen. He should only show himself attended by a great train of gentlemen of his household.

"A peer can be amerced only by his peers, and never to any greater amount than five pounds, excepting in the case of a duke, who can be amerced ten.

"A peer may retain six aliens born, any other Englishman but four.

"A peer can have wine custom-free; an earl eight tuns.

* As much as to say, the other daughters are provided for as best may be. (Note by Ursus on the margin of the wall.)

"A peer is alone exempt from presenting himself before the sheriff of the circuit.

"A peer cannot be assessed towards the militia.

"When it pleases a peer he raises a regiment and gives it to the king; thus have done their graces the Dukes of Athol, Hamilton, and Northumberland.

"A peer can hold only of a peer.

"In a civil cause he can demand the adjournment of the case, if there be not at least one knight on the jury.

"A peer nominates his own chaplains. A baron appoints three chaplains; a viscount four; an earl and a marquis five; a duke six.

"A peer cannot be put to the rack, even for high treason. A peer cannot be branded on the hand. A peer is a clerk, though he knows not how to read. In law he knows.

"A duke has a right to a canopy, or cloth of state, in all places where the king is not present; a viscount may have one in his house; a baron has a cover of assay, which may be held under his cup while he drinks. A baroness has the right to have her train borne by a man in the presence of a viscountess.

"Eighty-six tables, with five hundred dishes, are served every day in the royal palace at each meal.

"If a plebeian strike a lord, his hand is cut off.

"A lord is very nearly a king.

"The king is very nearly a god.

"The earth is a lordship.

"The English address God as my lord!"

Opposite this writing was written a second one, in the same fashion, which ran thus:

"SATISFACTION WHICH MUST SUFFICE THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING.

"Henry Auverquerque, Earl of Grantham, who sits in the House of Lords between the Earl of Jersey and the Earl of Greenwich, has a hundred thousand a year. To his lordship belongs the palace of Grantham Terrace, built all of marble and famous for what is called the labyrinth of passages,—a curiosity which contains the scarlet corridor in marble of Sarancolin, the brown corridor in lumachel of Astracan, the white corridor in marble of Lani, the black corridor in marble of Alabanda, the grey corridor in marble of Staremma, the yellow corridor in marble of Hesse, the green corridor in marble of the Tyrol, the red corridor, half cherry-spotted marble of Bohemia, half lumachel of Cordova, the blue corridor in turquin of Genoa, the violet in granite of Catalonia,

the mourning-hued corridor veined black and white in slate of Murviedro, the pink corridor in cipolin of the Alps, the pearl corridor in lumachel of Nonetta, and the corridor of all colors, called the courtiers' corridor, in motley.



"Richard Lowther, Viscount Lonsdale, owns Lowther in Westmoreland, which has a magnificent approach, and a flight of entrance steps which seem to invite the ingress of kings.

"Richard, Earl of Scarborough, Viscount and Baron Lumley of Lumley Castle, Viscount Lumley of Waterford in Ireland, and Lord Lieutenant and Vice-Admiral of the county of Northumberland and of Durham, both city and county, owns the double castleward of old and

new Sandbeck, where you admire a superb railing, in the form of a semicircle, surrounding the basin of a matchless fountain. He has, besides, his castle of Lumley.

"Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness, has his domain of Holderness, with baronial towers, and large gardens laid out in French fashion, where he drives in his coach-and-six, preceded by two outriders, as becomes a peer of England.

"Charles Beauclerc, Duke of St. Alban's, Earl of Burford, Baron Heddington, Grand Falconer of England, has an abode at Windsor, regal even by the side of the king's.

"Charles Bodville Robartes, Baron Robartes of Truro, Viscount Bodmin and Earl of Radnor, owns Wimpole in Cambridgeshire, which is as three palaces in one, having three façades, one bowed and two triangular. The approach is by an avenue of trees four deep.

"The most noble and most puissant Lord Philip, Baron Herbert of Cardiff, Earl of Montgomery and of Pembroke, Ross of Kendall, Parr, Fitzhugh, Marmion, St. Quentin, and Herbert of Shurland, Warden of the Stannaries in the counties of Cornwall and Devon, hereditary visitor of Jesus College, possesses the wonderful gardens at Wilton, where there are two sheaf-like fountains, finer than those of his most Christian Majesty King Louis XIV. at Versailles.

"Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, owns Somerset House on the Thames, which is equal to the Villa Pamphili at Rome. On the chimney-piece are seen two porcelain vases of the dynasty of Yuen, which are worth half a million in French money.

"In Yorkshire, Arthur, Lord Ingram, Viscount Irwin, has Temple Newsam, which is entered under a triumphal arch, and which has large wide roofs resembling Moorish terraces.

"Robert, Lord Ferrers of Chartly, Bourchier and Louvaine, has Staunton Harold in Leicestershire, of which the park is geometrically planned in the shape of a temple with a façade, and in front of the piece of water is the great church with the square belfry, which belongs to his lordship.

"In the county of Northampton, Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, member of His Majesty's Privy Council, possesses Althorp, at the entrance of which is a railing with four columns surmounted by groups in marble.

"Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, has, in Surrey, New Park, rendered magnificent by its sculptured pinnacles, its circular lawn belted by trees, and its woodland, at the extremity of which is a little mountain, artistically rounded, and surmounted by a large oak, which can be seen from afar.

"Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, possesses Bretby Hall in Derbyshire, with a splendid clock tower, falconries, warrens, and very fine sheets of water, long, square, and oval, one of which is shaped like a mirror, and has two jets, which throw the water to a great height.

"Charles Cornwallis, Baron Cornwallis of Eye, owns Broome Hall, a palace of the fourteenth century.

"The most noble Algernon Capel, Viscount Malden, Earl of Essex, has Cashiobury in Hertfordshire, a seat which has the shape of a capital H, and which rejoices sportsmen with its abundance of game.

"Charles, Lord Ossulston, owns Darnley in Middlesex, approached by Italian gardens.

"James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, has, seven leagues from London, Hatfield House, with its four lordly pavilions, its belfry in the centre, and its grand court-yard of black and white slabs, like that of St. Germain. This palace, which has a frontage 272 feet in length, was built in the reign of James I. by the Lord High Treasurer of England, the great-grandfather of the present earl. To be seen there is the bed of one of the Countesses of Salisbury: it is of inestimable value and made entirely of Brazilian wood, which is a panacea against the bites of serpents, and which is called *milhombres*, that is to say a thousand men. On this bed is inscribed, *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

"Edward Rich, Earl of Warwick and Holland, is owner of Warwick Castle, where whole oaks are burnt in the fire-places.

"In the parish of Sevenoaks, Charles Sackville, Baron Buckhurst, Baron Cranfield, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, is owner of Knowle, which is as large as a town and is composed of three palaces standing parallel one behind the other, like ranks of infantry. There are six gables in steps on the principal frontage, and a gate under a keep with four towers.

"Thomas Thynne, Baron Thynne of Warminster, and Viscount Weymouth, possesses Longleat, in which there are as many chimneys, cupolas, pinnacles, pepper-boxes, pavilions, and turrets, as at Chambord, in France, which belongs to the king.

"Henry Howard, Earl of Suffolk, owns, twelve leagues from London, the palace of Audley End in Essex, which in grandeur and dignity scarcely yields the palm to the Escorial of the King of Spain.

"In Bedfordshire, Wrest House and Park, which is a whole district, enclosed by ditches, walls, woodlands, rivers, and hills, belongs to Henry, Marquis of Kent.

"Hampton Court, in Herefordshire, with its strong embattled keep, and its gardens bounded by a piece of water which divides them from the forest, belongs to Thomas, Lord Coningsby.

"Grimsthorp, in Lincolnshire, with its long façade intersected by turrets in pale, its park, its fish-ponds, its pheasantries, its sheepfolds, its lawns, its grounds planted with rows of trees, its groves, its walks, its shrubberies, its flower-beds and borders, formed in square and lozenge-shape, and resembling great carpets; its race-courses, and the majestic sweep for carriages to turn in at the entrance of the house—belongs to Robert, Earl Lindsey, hereditary lord of the forest of Waltham.

"Up Park, in Sussex, a square house, with two symmetrical belfried pavilions on each side of the great court-yard, belongs to the Right Honorable Forde, Baron Grey of Werke, Viscount Glendale and Earl of Tankerville.

"Newnham Paddox, in Warwickshire, which has two quadrangular fish-ponds and a gabled archway with a large window of four panes, belongs to the Earl of Denbigh, who is also Count von Rheinfelden, in Germany.

"Wytham Abbey, in Berkshire, with its French garden in which there are four curiously trimmed arbors, and its great embattled towers, supported by two bastions, belongs to Montague, Earl of Abingdon, who also owns Rycote, of which he is Baron, and the principal door of which bears the device *Virtus ariete fortior*.

"William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, has six dwelling-places, of which Chatsworth (two-storied, and of the finest order of Grecian architecture) is one.

"The Viscount of Kinalmeaky, who is Earl of Cork, in Ireland, is owner of Burlington House, Piccadilly, with its extensive gardens, reaching to the fields outside London; he is also owner of Chiswick, where there are nine magnificent *corps de logis;* he also owns Londesborough, which is a new house by the side of an old palace.

"The Duke of Beaufort owns Chelsea, which contains two Gothic buildings, and a Florentine one; he has also Badminton, in Gloucestershire, a residence from which a number of avenues branch out like rays from a star. The most noble and puissant prince Henry, Duke of Beaufort, is also Marquis and Earl of Worcester, Earl of Glamorgan, Viscount Grosmont, and Baron Herbert of Chepstow, Ragland, and Gower, Baron Beaufort of Caldecott Castle, and Baron de Bottetourt.

"John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, and Marquis of Clare, owns Bolsover, with its majestic square keeps; his also, is Haughton, in Nottinghamshire, where a round pyramid, made to imitate the Tower of Babel, stands in the centre of a basin of water.

"William, Earl of Craven, Viscount Uffington, and Baron Craven of Hamstead Marshall, owns Combe Abbey in Warwickshire, where is

to be seen the finest water-jet in England; and in Berkshire two baronies, Hamstead Marshall, on the façade of which are five Gothic lanterns sunk in the wall, and Ashdown Park, which is a country seat situate at the point of intersection of cross-roads in the forest.

"Linnaeus, Lord Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, derives his title from the castle of Clancharlie, built in 912 by Edward the Elder, as a defense against the Danes. Besides Hunkerville House, in London, which is a palace, he has Corleone Lodge at Windsor, which is another, and eight castlewards, one at Burton-on-Trent, with a royalty on the carriage of plaster of Paris; then Grumdaith, Humble, Moricambe, Trewardraith, Hell-Kesters (where there is a miraculous well), Phillinmore, with its turf bogs, Reculver, near the ancient city Vagniac, Vinecaunton, on the Moel-eulle Mountain; besides nineteen boroughs and villages with reeves, and the whole of Penneth chase, all of which bring his lordship 40,000*l* a year.

"The 172 peers enjoying their dignities under James II. possess among them altogether a revenue of 1,272,000*l*. sterling a year, which is the eleventh part of the revenue of England."

In the margin, opposite the last name (that of Linnaeus, Lord Clancharlie), there was a note in the handwriting of Ursus:

Rebel; in exile; houses, lands, and chattels sequestrated. It is well.

URSUS admired Homo. One admires one's like. It is a law.

To be always raging inwardly and grumbling outwardly was the normal condition of Ursus. He was the malcontent of creation. By nature he was a man ever in opposition. He took the world unkindly; he gave his satisfecit to no one and to nothing. The bee did not atone, by its honey-making, for its sting; a full-blown rose did not absolve the sun for yellow fever and black vomit. It is probable that in secret Ursus criticised Providence a good deal. "Evidently," he would say, "the devil works by a spring, and the wrong that God does is having let go the trigger." He approved of none but princes, and he had his own peculiar way of expressing his approbation. One day, when James II. made a gift to the Virgin in a Catholic chapel in Ireland of a massive gold lamp, Ursus, passing that way with Homo, who was more indifferent to such things, broke out in admiration before the crowd,

and exclaimed: "It is certain that the blessed Virgin wants a lamp much more than those barefooted children there require shoes."

Such proofs of his loyalty, and such evidences of his respect for established powers, probably contributed in no small degree to make the magistrates tolerate his vagabond life and his low alliance with a wolf. Sometimes of an evening, through the weakness of friendship, he allowed Homo to stretch his limbs and wander at liberty about the caravan. The wolf was incapable of an abuse of confidence, and behaved in society, that is to say among men, with the discretion of a poodle. All the same, if bad-tempered officials had to be dealt with, difficulties might have arisen; so Ursus kept the honest wolf chained up as much as possible.

From a political point of view his writing about gold, not very intelligible in itself, and now become undecipherable, was but a smear, and gave no handle to the enemy. Even after the time of James II., and under the "respectable" reign of William and Mary, his caravan might have been seen peacefully going its rounds of the little English country towns. He traveled freely from one end of Great Britain to the other, selling his philtres and phials, and sustaining, with the assistance of his wolf, his quack mummeries; and he passed with ease through the meshes of the nets which the police at that period had spread all over England in order to sift wandering gangs, and especially to stop the progress of the Comprachicos.

This was right enough. Ursus belonged to no gang. Ursus lived with Ursus, a *tête-à-tête*, into which the wolf gently thrust his nose. If Ursus could have had his way, he would have been a Caribbee; that being impossible, he preferred to be alone. The solitary man is a modified savage, accepted by civilization. He who wanders most is most alone; hence his continual change of place. To remain anywhere long, suffocated him with the sense of being tamed. He passed his life in passing on his way. The sight of towns increased his taste for brambles, thickets, thorns, and holes in the rock. His home was the forest. He did not feel himself much out of his element in the murmur of crowded streets, which is like enough to the bluster of trees. The crowd to some extent satisfies our taste for the desert. What he disliked in his van was its having a door and windows, and thus resembling a house. He would have realized his ideal, had he been able to put a cave on four wheels and travel in a den.

He did not smile, as we have already said, but he used to laugh; sometimes, indeed frequently, a bitter laugh. There is consent in a smile, while a laugh is often a refusal.

His great business was to hate the human race. He was implacable

in that hate. Having made it clear that human life is a dreadful thing; having observed the superposition of evils, kings on the people, war on kings, the plague on war, famine on the plague, folly on everything, having proved a certain measure of chastisement in the mere fact of existence, having recognized that death is a deliverance, when they brought him a sick man he cured him; he had cordials and beverages to prolong the lives of the old. He put lame cripples on their legs again, and hurled this sarcasm at them, "There, you are on your paws once more, may you walk long in this valley of tears!" When he saw a poor man dying of hunger, he gave him all the pence he had about him, growling out, "Live on, you wretch! eat! last a long time! It is not I who would shorten your penal servitude." After which, he would rub his hands and say, "I do men all the harm I can."

Through the little window at the back, passers-by could read on the ceiling of the van these words, written within, but visible from without, inscribed with charcoal, in big letters,—URSUS, PHILOSOPHER.

II

THE COMPRACHICOS

I

WHO now knows the word Comprachicos, and who knows its meaning?

The Comprachicos, or Comprapequeños, were a hideous and nondescript association of wanderers, famous in the 17th century, forgotten in the 18th, unheard of in the 19th. The Comprachicos are like the "succession powder," an ancient social characteristic detail. They are part of old human ugliness. To the great eye of history, which sees everything collectively, the Comprachicos belong to the colossal fact of slavery. Joseph sold by his brethren is a chapter in their story. The Comprachicos have left their traces in the penal laws of Spain and England. You find here and there in the dark confusion of English laws the impress of this horrible truth, like the footprint of a savage in a forest.

Comprachicos, the same as Comprapequeños, is a compound Spanish word signifying Child-buyers.

The Comprachicos traded in children. They bought and sold them. They did not steal them. The kidnapping of children is another branch of industry. And what did they make of these children?

Monsters.

Why monsters?

To laugh at.

The populace must needs laugh; and kings too. The mountebank is wanted in the streets; the jester at the Louvre. The one is called a Clown, the other a Fool.

The efforts of man to procure himself pleasure are at times worthy of the attention of the philosopher.

What are we sketching in these few preliminary pages? A chapter in the most terrible of books; a book which might be entitled—*The Farming of the unhappy by the happy.*



II

A CHILD destined to be a plaything for men—such a thing has existed; such a thing exists even now. In simple and savage times such a thing constituted an especial trade. The 17th century, called the great century, was of those times. It was a century very Byzantine in tone. It combined corrupt simplicity with delicate ferocity; a curious variety of civilization. A tiger with a simper. Madame de Sevigné minces on the subject of the faggot and the wheel. That century traded

a good deal in children. Flattering historians have concealed the sore, but have divulged the remedy, Vincent de Paul.

In order that a human toy should succeed, he must be taken early. The dwarf must be fashioned when young. We play with childhood. But a well-formed child is not very amusing; a hunchback is better fun.

Hence grew an art. There were trainers who took a man and made him an abortion; they took a face and made a muzzle; they stunted growth; they kneaded the features. The artificial production of teratological cases had its rules. It was quite a science; what one can imagine as the antithesis of orthopedy. Where God had put a look, their art put a squint; where God had made harmony, they made discord; where God had made the perfect picture, they re-established the sketch; and, in the eyes of connoisseurs, it was the sketch which was perfect. They debased animals as well; they invented piebald horses. Turenne rode a piebald horse. In our own days do they not dye dogs blue and green? Nature is our canvas. Man has always wished to add something to God's work. Man retouches creation, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. The Court buffoon was nothing but an attempt to lead back man to the monkey. It was a progress the wrong way. A masterpiece in retrogression. At the same time they tried to make a man of the monkey. Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland and Countess of Southampton, had a marmoset for a page. Frances Sutton, Baroness Dudley, eighth peeress in the bench of barons, had tea served by a baboon clad in gold brocade, which her ladyship called My Black. Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, used to go and take her seat in Parliament in a coach with armorial bearings, behind which stood, their muzzles stuck up in the air, three Cape monkeys in grand livery. A Duchess of Medina-Celi, whose toilette Cardinal Pole witnessed, had her stockings put on by an ourang-outang. These monkeys raised in the scale were a counterpoise to men brutalized and bestialized. This promiscuousness of man and beast, desired by the great, was especially prominent in the case of the dwarf and the dog. The dwarf never quitted the dog, which was always bigger than himself. The dog was the pair of the dwarf; it was as if they were coupled with a collar. This juxtaposition is authenticated by a mass of domestic records; notably by the portrait of Jeffrey Hudson, dwarf of Henrietta of France, daughter of Henri IV., and wife of Charles I.

To degrade man tends to deform him. The suppression of his state was completed by disfigurement. Certain vivisectors of that period succeeded marvelously well in effacing from the human face the divine effigy. Doctor Conquest, member of the Amen-street College, and judicial visitor of the chemists' shops of London, wrote a book in Latin on

this pseudo-surgery, the processes of which he describes. If we are to believe Justus of Carrickfergus, the inventor of this branch of surgery was a monk named Avonmore; an Irish word signifying Great River.

The dwarf of the Elector Palatine, Perkeo, whose effigy—or ghost—springs from a magical box in the cave of Heidelberg, was a remarkable specimen of this science, very varied in its applications. It fashioned beings the law of whose existence was hideously simple: it permitted them to suffer, and commanded them to amuse.

III

The manufacture of monsters was practiced on a large scale, and comprised various branches.

The Sultan required them, so did the Pope; the one to guard his women, the other to say his prayers. These were of a peculiar kind, incapable of reproduction. Scarcely human beings, they were useful to voluptuousness and to religion. The seraglio and the Sistine Chapel utilized the same species of monsters; fierce in the former case, mild in the latter.

They knew how to produce things in those days which are not produced now; they had talents which we lack, and it is not without reason that some good folk cry out that the decline has come. We no longer know how to sculpture living human flesh; this is consequent on the loss of the art of torture. Men were once virtuosos in that respect, but are so no longer; the art has become so simplified that it will soon disappear altogether. In cutting the limbs of living men, in opening their bellies and in dragging out their entrails, phenomena were grasped on the moment and discoveries made. We are obliged to renounce these experiments now, and are thus deprived of the progress which surgery made by aid of the executioner.

The vivisection of former days was not limited to the manufacture of phenomena for the market-place, of buffoons for the palace (a species of augmentative of the courtier), and eunuchs for sultans and popes. It abounded in varieties. One of its triumphs was the manufacture of cocks for the king of England.

It was the custom, in the palace of the kings of England, to have a sort of watchman, who crowed like a cock. This watcher, awake while all others slept, ranged the palace, and raised from hour to hour the cry of the farm-yard, repeating it as often as was necessary, and thus supplying a clock. This man, promoted to be cock, had in childhood undergone the operation of the pharynx, which was part of the art

described by Dr. Conquest. Under Charles II. the salivation inseparable to the operation having disgusted the Duchess of Portsmouth, the appointment was indeed preserved, so that the splendor of the crown should not be tarnished, but they got an unmutilated man to represent the cock. A retired officer was generally selected for this honorable employment. Under James II. the functionary was named William Sampson, Cock, and received for his crow *9l. 2s. 6d.* annually.*

The memoirs of Catherine II. inform us that at St. Petersburg, scarcely a hundred years since, whenever the czar or czarina was displeased with a Russian prince, he was forced to squat down in the great ante-chamber of the palace, and to remain in that posture a certain number of days, mewing like a cat, or clucking like a sitting hen, and pecking his food from the floor.

These fashions have passed away; but not so much, perhaps, as one might imagine. Nowadays, courtiers slightly modify their intonation in clucking to please their masters. More than one picks up from the ground—we will not say from the mud—what he eats.

It is very fortunate that kings cannot err. Hence their contradictions never perplex us. In approving always, one is sure to be always right—which is pleasant. Louis XIV. would not have liked to see at Versailles either an officer acting the cock, or a prince acting the turkey. That which raised the royal and imperial dignity in England and Russia would have seemed to Louis the Great incompatible with the crown of St. Louis. We know what his displeasure was when Madame Henriette forgot herself so far as to see a hen in a dream—which was, indeed, a grave breach of good manners in a lady of the court. When one is of the court, one should not dream of the court-yard. Bossuet, it may be remembered, was nearly as scandalized as Louis XIV.

IV

THE commerce in children in the 17th century, as we have explained, was connected with a trade. The Comprachicos engaged in the commerce, and carried on the trade. They bought children, worked a little on the raw material, and re-sold them afterwards.

The vendors were of all kinds: from the wretched father, getting rid of his family, to the master, utilizing his stud of slaves. The sale of men was a simple matter. In our own time we have had fighting to maintain this right. Remember that it is less than a century ago since

* See Chamberlayne's "Present State of England," 1688. Part I., Chap. xiii., p. 179.

the Elector of Hesse sold his subjects to the King of England, who required men to be killed in America. Kings went to the Elector of Hesse as we go to the butcher to buy meat. The Elector had food for powder in stock, and hung up his subjects in his shop. Come buy, it is for sale. In England, under Jefferies, after the tragical episode of Monmouth, there were many lords and gentlemen beheaded and quartered. Those who were executed left wives and daughters, widows and orphans, whom James II. gave to the queen, his wife. The queen sold these ladies to William Penn. Very likely the king had so much per cent. on the transaction. The extraordinary thing is, not that James II. should have sold the women, but that William Penn should have bought them. Penn's purchase is excused, or explained, by the fact that having a desert to sow with men, he needed women as farming implements.

Her Gracious Majesty made a good business out of these ladies. The young sold dear. We may imagine, with the uneasy feeling which a complicated scandal arouses, that probably some old duchesses were thrown in cheap.

The Comprachicos where also called the Cheylas, a Hindoo word, which conveys the image of harrying a nest.

For a long time the Comprachicos only partially concealed themselves. There is sometimes in the social order a favoring shadow thrown over iniquitous trades, in which they thrive. In our own day we have seen an association of the kind in Spain, under the direction of the ruffian Ramon Selles, last from 1834 to 1866, and hold three provinces under terror for thirty years—Valencia, Alicante, and Murcia.

Under the Stuarts, the Comprachicos were by no means in bad odor at court. On occasions they were used for reasons of state. For James II. they were almost an *instrumentum regni*. It was a time when families, which were refractory or in the way, were dismembered; when a descent was cut short; when heirs were suddenly suppressed. At times one branch was defrauded to the profit of another. The Comprachicos had a genius for disfiguration which recommended them to state-policy. To disfigure is better than to kill. There was, indeed, the Iron Mask, but that was a mighty measure. Europe could not be peopled with iron masks, while deformed tumblers ran about the streets without creating any surprise. Besides, the iron mask is removable; not so the mask of flesh. You are masked for ever by your own flesh—what can be more ingenious? The Comprachicos worked on man as the Chinese work on trees. They had their secrets, as we have said; they had tricks which are now lost arts. A sort of fantastic stunted thing left their hands; it was ridiculous and wonderful. They would touch up a little being with such skill that its father could not have known it.

Sometimes they left the spine straight and remade the face. They unmarked a child as one might unmark a pocket-handkerchief.

Products, destined for tumblers, had their joints dislocated in a masterly manner—you would have said they had been boned. Thus gymnasts were made.

Not only did the Comprachicos take away his face from the child, they also took away his memory. At least they took away all they could of it; the child had no consciousness of the mutilation to which he had been subjected. This frightful surgery left its traces on his countenance, but not on his mind. The most he could recall was that one day he had been seized by men, that next he had fallen asleep, and then that he had been cured. Cured of what? he did not know. Of burnings by sulphur and incisions by the iron he remembered nothing. The Comprachicos deadened the little patient by means of a stupefying powder which was thought to be magical, and suppressed all pain. This powder has been known from time immemorial in China, and is still employed there in the present day. The Chinese have been beforehand with us in all our inventions—printing, artillery, aërostation, chloroform. Only the discovery which in Europe at once takes life and birth, and becomes a prodigy and a wonder, remains a chrysalis in China, and is preserved in a deathlike state. China is a museum of embryos.

Since we are in China, let us remain there a moment to note a peculiarity. In China, from time immemorial, they have possessed a certain refinement of industry and art. It is the art of moulding a living man. They take a child, two or three years old, put him in a porcelain vase, more or less grotesque, which is made without top or bottom, to allow egress for the head and feet. During the day the vase is set upright, and at night is laid down to allow the child to sleep. Thus the child thickens without growing taller, filling up with his compressed flesh and distorted bones the reliefs in the vase. This development in a bottle continues many years. After a certain time it becomes irreparable. When they consider that this is accomplished, and the monster made, they break the vase. The child comes out—and, behold, there is a man in the shape of a mug!

This is convenient; by ordering your dwarf betimes you are able to have it of any shape you wish.

V

JAMES II. tolerated the Comprachicos for the good reason that he made use of them; at least it happened that he did so more than once.

We do not always disdain to use what we despise. This low trade, an excellent expedient sometimes for the higher one which is called state policy, was willingly left in a miserable state, but was not persecuted. There was no surveillance, but a certain amount of attention. Thus



much might be useful—the law closed one eye, the king opened the other.

Sometimes the king went so far as to avow his complicity. These are audacities of monarchical terrorism. The disfigured one was marked with the fleur-de-lys; they took from him the mark of God, they put on him the mark of the king. Jacob Astley, knight and baronet, lord of Melton Constable, in the county of Norfolk, had in his family a child who had been sold, and upon whose forehead the dealer

had imprinted a fleur-de-lys with a hot iron. In certain cases in which it was held desirable to register for some reason the royal origin of the new position made for the child, they used such means. England has always done us the honor to utilize, for her personal service, the fleur-de-lys.

The Comprachicos, allowing for the shade which divides a trade from a fanaticism, were analogous to the Stranglers of India. They lived among themselves in gangs, and to facilitate their progress, affected somewhat of the Merry-Andrew. They encamped here and there, but they were grave and religious, bearing no affinity to other nomads, and incapable of theft. The people for a long time wrongly confounded them with the Moors of Spain and the Moors of China. The Moors of Spain were coiners, the Moors of China were thieves. There was nothing of the sort about the Comprachicos; they were honest folk Whatever you may think of them, they were sometimes sincerely scrupulous. They pushed open a door, entered, bargained for a child, paid, and departed. All was done with propriety.

They were of all countries. Under the name of Comprachicos fraternized English, French, Castilians, Germans, Italians. A unity of idea, a unity of superstition, the pursuit of the same calling, make such fusions. In this fraternity of vagabonds, those of the Mediterranean seaboard represented the East, those of the Atlantic seaboard the West. Many Basques conversed with many Irishmen. The Basque and the Irishman understand each other, they speak the old Punic jargon; add to this the intimate relations of Catholic Ireland with Catholic Spain—relations such that they terminated by bringing to the gallows in London one almost King of Ireland, the Celtic Lord de Brany; from which resulted the county of Leitrim.

The Comprachicos were rather a fellowship than a tribe; rather a residuum than a fellowship. It was all the riff-raff of the universe, having for their trade a crime. It was a sort of harlequin people, all composed of rags. To recruit a man was to sew on a tatter.

To wander was the Comprachicos' law of existence—to appear and disappear. What is barely tolerated cannot take root. Even in the kingdoms where their business supplied the courts, and, on occasions, served as an auxiliary to the royal power, they were now and then suddenly ill-treated. Kings made use of their art, and sent the artists to the galleys. These inconsistencies belong to the ebb and flow of royal caprice. "For such is our pleasure."

A rolling stone and a roving trade gather no moss. The Comprachicos were poor. They might have said what the lean and ragged witch observed, when she saw them setting fire to the stake, "Le jeu

n'en vaut pas la chandelle." It is possible, nay probable (their chiefs remaining unknown), that the wholesale contractors in the trade were rich. After the lapse of two centuries, it would be difficult to throw any light on this point.

It was, as we have said, a fellowship. It had its laws, its oaths, its formulæ—it had almost its cabala. Any one nowadays wishing to know all about the Comprachicos, need only go into Biscaya or Galicia; there were many Basques among them, and it is in those mountains that one hears their history. To this day the Comprachicos are spoken of at Oyarzun, at Urbistondo, at Leso, at Astigarraga. *Aguardate niño, que voy a llamar al Comprachicos*—Take care, child, or I'll call the Comprachicos—is the cry with which mothers frighten their children in that country.

The Comprachicos, like the Zigeuner and the Gypsies, had appointed places for periodical meetings. From time to time their leaders conferred together. In the seventeenth century they had four principal points of rendezvous. One in Spain, the pass of Pancorbo; one in Germany, the glade called the Wicked Woman, near Diekirsch, where there are two enigmatic bas-reliefs, representing a woman with a head and a man without one; one in France, the hill where was the colossal statue of Massue-la-Promesse in the old sacred wood of Borvo Tomona, near Bourbonne les Bains; one in England, behind the garden wall of William Challoner, Squire of Gisborough in Cleveland, Yorkshire, behind the square tower and the great wing which is entered by an arched door.

VI

The laws against vagabonds have always been very rigorous in England. England, in her Gothic legislation, seemed to be inspired with this principle, *Homo errans fera errante pejor*. One of the special statutes classifies the man without a home as "more dangerous than the asp, dragon, lynx, or basilisk" (*atrocior aspide, dracone, lynce, et basilico*). For a long time England troubled herself as much concerning the gypsies, of whom she wished to be rid, as about the wolves of which she had been cleared. In that the Englishman differed from the Irishman, who prayed to the saints for the health of the wolf, and called him my godfather.

English law, nevertheless, in the same way as (we have just seen) it tolerated the wolf, tamed, domesticated, and become in some sort a dog, tolerated the regular vagabond, become in some sort a subject. It

did not trouble itself about either the mountebank or the traveling barber, or the quack doctor, or the peddler, or the open-air scholar, as long as they had a trade to live by. Further than this, and with these exceptions, the description of freedom which exists in the wanderer terrified the law. A tramp was a possible public enemy. That modern thing, the lounger, was then unknown; that ancient thing, the vagrant, was alone understood. A suspicious appearance, that indescribable something which all understand and none can define, was sufficient reason that society should take a man by the collar. "Where do you live? How do you get your living?" And if he could not answer, harsh penalties awaited him. Iron and fire were in the code: the law practiced the cauterization of vagrancy.

Hence, throughout English territory, a veritable "loi des suspects" was applicable to vagrants (who, it must be owned, readily became malefactors), and particularly to gypsies, whose expulsion has erroneously been compared to the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors from Spain, and the Protestants from France. As for us, we do not confound a battue with a persecution.

The Comprachicos, we insist, had nothing in common with the gypsies. The gypsies were a nation; the Comprachicos were a compound of all nations—the lees of a horrible vessel full of filthy waters. The Comprachicos had not, like the gypsies, an idiom of their own; their jargon was a promiscuous collection of idioms: all languages were mixed together in their language; they spoke a medley. Like the gypsies, they had come to be a people winding through the peoples; but their common tie was association, not race. At all epochs in history one finds in the vast liquid mass which constitutes humanity some of these streams of venomous men exuding poison around them. The gypsies were a tribe; the Comprachicos a freemasonry—a masonry having not a noble aim, but a hideous handicraft. Finally, their religions differ—the gypsies were Pagans, the Comprachicos were Christians, and more than that, good Christians, as became an association which, although a mixture of all nations, owed its birth to Spain, a devout land.

They were more than Christians, they were Catholics; they were more than Catholics, they were Romans, and so touchy in their faith, and so pure, that they refused to associate with the Hungarian nomads of the comitat of Pesth, commanded and led by an old man, having for sceptre a wand with a silver ball, surmounted by the double-headed Austrian eagle. It is true that these Hungarians were schismatics, to the extent of celebrating the Assumption on the 29th August, which is an abomination.

In England, so long as the Stuarts reigned, the confederation of

the Comprachicos was (for motives of which we have already given you a glimpse) to a certain extent protected. James II., a devout man, who persecuted the Jews and trampled out the gypsies, was a good prince to the Comprachicos. We have seen why. The Comprachicos were buyers of the human wares in which he was dealer. They excelled in disappearances. Disappearances are occasionally necessary for the good of the State. An inconvenient heir of tender age whom they took and handled lost his shape. This facilitated confiscation; the transfer of titles to favorites was simplified. The Comprachicos were, moreover, very discreet, and very taciturn. They bound themselves to silence and kept their word, which is necessary in affairs of state. There was scarcely an example of their having betrayed the secrets of the king. This was, it is true, for their interest; and if the king had lost confidence in them, they would have been in great danger. They were thus of use in a political point of view. Moreover, these artists furnished singers for the Holy Father. The Comprachicos were useful for the *Miserere* of Allegri. They were particularly devoted to Mary. All this pleased the papistry of the Stuarts. James II. could not be hostile to holy men who pushed their devotion to the Virgin to the extent of manufacturing eunuchs. In 1688 there was a change of dynasty in England. Orange supplanted Stuart. William III. replaced James II.

James II. went away to die in exile, miracles were performed on his tomb, and his relics cured the Bishop of Autun of fistula—a worthy recompense of the Christian virtues of the prince.

William, having neither the same ideas nor the same practices as James, was severe to the Comprachicos. He did his best to crush out the vermin.

A statute of the early part of William and Mary's reign hit the association of child-buyers hard. It was as the blow of a club to the Comprachicos, who were from that time pulverized. By the terms of this statute those of the fellowship taken and duly convicted, were to be branded with a red-hot iron, imprinting R. on the shoulder, signifying rogue; on the left hand T, signifying thief; and on the right hand M, signifying man-slayer. The chiefs, "supposed to be rich, although beggars in appearance," were to be punished in the *collistrigium*—that is, the pillory, and branded on the forehead with a P, besides having their goods confiscated, and the trees in their woods rooted up. Those who did not inform against the Comprachicos were to be punished by confiscation and imprisonment for life, as for the crime of misprision. As for the women found among these men, they were to suffer the cucking-stool—this is a see-saw, the name of which is composed of the French word *coquine*, and the German *stuhl*. English law being en-

dowed with a strange longevity, this punishment still exists in English legislation for quarrelsome women. The cucking-stool is suspended over a river or a pond, the woman seated on it. The chair is allowed to drop into the water, and then pulled out. This dipping of the woman is repeated three times, "to refresh her anger," says the commentator, Chamberlayne.

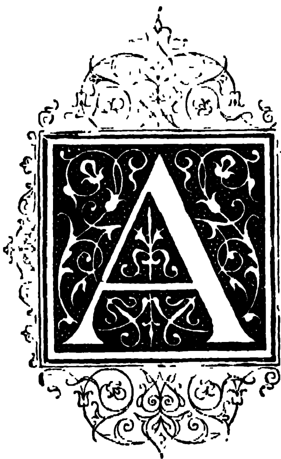


BOOK I

NIGHT NOT SO BLACK AS MAN

CHAPTER I

PORTLAND BILL



AN obstinate north wind blew without ceasing over the mainland of Europe, and yet more roughly over England, during all the month of December, 1689, and all the month of January, 1690. Hence the disastrous cold weather, which caused that winter to be noted as "memorable to the poor," on the margin of the old Bible in the Presbyterian chapel of the Non-jurors in London. Thanks to the lasting qualities of the old monarchical parchment employed in official registers, long lists of poor persons, found dead of famine and cold, are still legible in many local repositories, particularly in the archives of the Liberty of the Clink, in the borough of Southwark, of Pie Powder Court (which signifies Dusty Feet Court), and in those of Whitechapel Court, held in the village of Stepney by the bailiff of the Lord of the Manor. The Thames was frozen over—a thing which does not happen once in a century, as the ice forms on it with difficulty owing to the action of the sea. Coaches rolled over the frozen river, and a fair was held with booths, bear-baiting and bull-baiting. An ox was roasted whole on the ice. This thick ice lasted two months. The hard year 1690 surpassed in

severity even the famous winters at the beginning of the seventeenth century, so minutely observed by Dr. Gideon Delane, the same who was, in his quality of apothecary to King James, honored by the city of London with a bust and a pedestal.

One evening, towards the close of one of the most bitter days of the month of January, 1690, something unusual was going on in one of the numerous inhospitable bights of the Bay of Portland, which caused the sea-gulls and wild geese to scream and circle round its mouth, not daring to re-enter.

In this creek, the most dangerous of all which line the bay, during the continuance of certain winds, and consequently the most lonely—convenient by reason of its very danger, for ships in hiding—a little vessel, almost touching the cliff, so deep was the water, was moored to a point of rock. We are wrong in saying, The night falls; we should say the night rises, for it is from the earth that obscurity comes. It was already night at the bottom of the cliff; it was still day at top. Any one approaching the vessel's moorings would have recognized a Biscayan hooker.

The sun, concealed all day by the mist, had just set. There was beginning to be felt that deep and sombrous melancholy which might be called anxiety for the absent sun. With no wind from the sea, the water of the creek was calm.

This was, especially in winter, a lucky exception. Almost all the Portland creeks have sand-bars; and in heavy weather the sea becomes very rough, and, to pass in safety, much skill and practice are necessary. These little ports (ports more in appearance than fact) are of small advantage. They are hazardous to enter, fearful to leave. On this evening, for a wonder, there was no danger.

The Biscay hooker is of an ancient model, now fallen into disuse. This kind of hooker, which has done service even in the navy, was stoutly built in its hull; a boat in size, a ship in strength. It figured in the Armada. Sometimes the war-hooker attained to a high tonnage; thus the *Great Griffin*, bearing a captain's flag, and commanded by Lopez de Medina, measured six hundred and fifty good tons, and carried forty guns. But the merchant and contraband hookers were very feeble specimens. Sea-folk held them at their true value, and esteemed the model a very sorry one. The rigging of the hooker was made of hemp, sometimes with wire inside, which was probably intended as a means, however unscientific, of obtaining indications, in the case of magnetic tension. The lightness of this rigging did not exclude the use of heavy tackle, the cabrias of the Spanish galleon, and the cameli of the Roman triremes. The helm was very long, which gives the advantage of a long

arm of leverage, but the disadvantage of a small arc of effort. Two wheels in two pulleys at the end of the tiller corrected this defect, and compensated, to some extent, for the loss of strength. The compass was well housed in a case perfectly square, and well-balanced by its two copper frames placed horizontally, one in the other, on little bolts, as in Cardan's lamps. There was science and cunning in the construction of the hooker, but it was ignorant science and barbarous cunning. The hooker was primitive, just like the praam and the canoe; was kindred to the praam in stability and to the canoe in swiftness, and, like all vessels born of the instinct of the pirate and fisherman, it had remarkable



sea qualities; it was equally well suited to land-locked and to open waters. Its system of sails, complicated in stays, and very peculiar, allowed of its navigating trimly in the close bays of Asturias (which are little more than enclosed basins, as Pasages for instance), and also freely out at sea. It could sail round a lake, and sail round the world—a strange craft with two objects, good for a pond and good for a storm. The hooker is among vessels what the wagtail is among birds, one of the smallest and one of the boldest. The wagtail perching on a reed, scarcely bends it, and, flying away, crosses the ocean.

These Biscay hookers, even to the poorest, were gilt and painted. Tattooing is part of the genius of those charming people, savages to some degree. The sublime coloring of their mountains, variegated by snows and meadows, reveals to them the rugged spell which ornament possesses in itself. They are poverty-stricken and magnificent; they put coats-of-arms on their cottages; they have huge asses, which they bedizen with bells, and huge oxen, on which they put head-dresses of

feathers. Their coaches, which you can hear grinding the wheels two leagues off, are illuminated, carved, and hung with ribands. A cobbler has a bas-relief on his door; it is only St. Crispin, and an old shoe; but it is in stone. They trim their leathern jackets with lace. They do not mend their rags, but they embroider them. Vivacity profound and superb! The Basques are like the Greeks, children of the sun; while the Valencian drapes himself, bare and sad, in his russet woolen rug, with a hole to pass his head through, the natives of Galicia and Biscay have the delight of fine linen shirts, bleached in the dew. Their thresholds and their windows teem with faces fair and fresh, laughing under garlands of maize; a joyous and proud serenity shines out in their ingenious arts, in their trades, in their customs, in the dress of their maidens, in their songs. The mountain, that colossal ruin, is all aglow in Biscay: the sun's rays go in and out of every break. The wild jaïzquivel is full of Idylls. Biscay is Pyrenean grace as Savoy is Alpine grace. The dangerous bays,—the neighbors of St. Sebastian, Leso, and Fontarabia,—with storms, with clouds, with spray flying over the capes, with the rages of the waves and the winds, with terror, with uproar, mingle boat-women crowned with roses. He who has seen the Basque country wishes to see it again. It is the blessed land. Two harvests a year; villages resonant and gay; a stately poverty; all Sunday the sound of guitars, dancing, castanets, love-making; houses clean and bright; storks in the belfries.

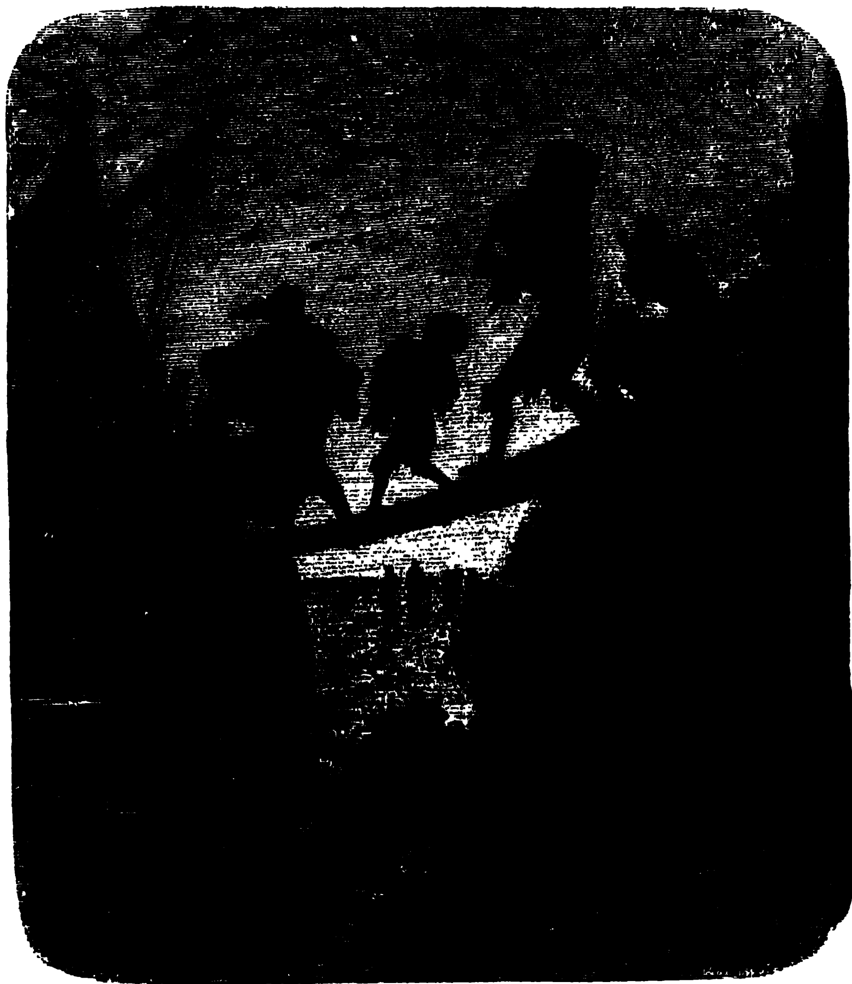
Let us return to Portland—that rugged mountain in the sea.

The peninsula of Portland, looked at geometrically, presents the appearance of a bird's head, of which the bill is turned towards the ocean, the back of the head towards Weymouth; the isthmus is its neck.

Portland, greatly to the sacrifice of its wildness, exists now but for trade. The coasts of Portland were discovered by quarrymen and plasterers towards the middle of the seventeenth century. Since that period what is called Roman cement has been made of the Portland stone—a useful industry, enriching the district, and disfiguring the bay. Two hundred years ago these coasts were eaten away as a cliff; to-day, as a quarry. The pick bites meanly, the wave grandly; hence a diminution of beauty. To the magnificent ravages of the ocean have succeeded the measured strokes of men. These measured strokes have worked away the creek where the Biscay hooker was moored. To find any vestige of the little anchorage, now destroyed, the eastern side of the peninsula should be searched, towards the point beyond Folly Pier and Dirdle Pier, beyond Wakeham even, between the place called Church Hope and the place called Southwell.

The creek, walled in on all sides by precipices higher than its

width, was minute by minute becoming more overshadowed by evening. The misty gloom, usual at twilight, became thicker; it was like a growth of darkness at the bottom of a well. The opening of the creek seaward, a narrow passage, traced on the almost night-black interior a pallid rift where the waves were moving. You must have been quite



close to perceive the hooker moored to the rocks, and, as it were, hidden by the great cloaks of shadow. A plank thrown from on board on to a low and level projection of the cliff, the only point on which a landing could be made, placed the vessel in communication with the land. Dark figures were crossing and recrossing each other on this tottering gangway, and in the shadow some people were embarking.

It was less cold in the creek than out at sea, thanks to the screen of rock rising over the north of the basin, which did not, however, prevent the people from shivering. They were hurrying. The effect of the twilight defined the forms as though they had been punched out with a tool. Certain indentations in their clothes were visible, and showed that they belonged to the class called in England, *The ragged.*

The twisting of the pathway could be distinguished vaguely in the relief of the cliff. A girl who lets her stay-lace hang down trailing over the back of an arm-chair, describes, without being conscious of it, most of the paths of cliffs and mountains. The pathway of this creek, full of knots and angles, almost perpendicular, and better adapted for goats than men, terminated on the platform where the plank was placed. The pathways of cliffs ordinarily imply a not very inviting declivity; they offer themselves less as a road than as a fall; they sink rather than incline. This one,—probably some ramification of a road on the plain above,—was disagreeable to look at, so vertical was it. From underneath you saw it gain by zig-zag the higher layer of the cliff where it passed out through deep passages on to the high plateau by a cutting in the rock; and the passengers for whom the vessel was waiting in the creek must have come by this path.

Excepting the movement of embarkation which was being made in the creek, a movement visibly scared and uneasy, all around was solitude; no step, no noise, no breath was heard. At the other side of the roads, at the entrance of Ringstead Bay, you could just perceive a flotilla of shark-fishing boats, which were evidently out of their reckoning. These polar boats had been driven from Danish into English waters by the whims of the sea. Northerly winds play these tricks on fishermen. They had just taken refuge in the anchorage of Portland—a sign of bad weather expected and danger out at sea. They were engaged in casting anchor. The chief boat, placed in front after the old manner of Norwegian flotillas, all her rigging standing out in black, above the white level of the sea; and in front might be perceived the hook-iron, loaded with all kinds of hooks and harpoons, destined for the Greenland shark, the dog-fish, and the spinous shark, as well as the nets to pick up the sun-fish. Except a few other craft, all swept into the same corner, the eye met nothing living on the vast horizon of Portland. Not a house, not a ship. The coast in those days was not inhabited, and the roads, at that season, were not safe.

Whatever may have been the appearance of the weather, the beings who were going to sail away in the Biscayan *urca*, pressed on the hour of departure all the same. They formed a busy and confused group, in rapid movement on the shore. To distinguish one from another was

difficult; impossible to tell whether they were old or young. The indistinctness of evening intermixed and blurred them; the mask of shadow was over their faces. They were sketches in the night. There were eight of them, and there were seemingly among them one or two women, hard to recognize under the rags and tatters in which the group was attired—clothes which were no longer man's or woman's. Rags have no sex.

A smaller shadow, flitting to and fro among the larger ones, indicated either a dwarf or a child.

It was a child.

CHAPTER II

LEFT ALONE

THIS is what an observer close at hand might have noted.

All wore long cloaks, torn and patched, but covering them, and at need concealing them up to the eyes; useful alike against the north wind and curiosity. They moved with ease under these cloaks. The greater number wore a handkerchief rolled round the head, a sort of rudiment which marks the commencement of the turban in Spain. This head-dress was nothing unusual in England. At that time the South was in fashion in the North; perhaps this was connected with the fact that the North was beating the South. It conquered and admired. After the defeat of the Armada, Castilian was considered in the halls of Elizabeth to be elegant court talk. To speak English in the palace of the Queen of England was held almost an impropriety. Partially to adopt the manners of those upon whom we impose our laws is the habit of the conquering barbarian towards conquered civilization. The Tartar contemplates and imitates the Chinese. It was thus Castilian fashions penetrated into England; in return, English interests crept into Spain.

One of the men in the group embarking appeared to be a chief. He had sandals on his feet, and was bedizened with gold lace tatters and a tinsel waistcoat, shining under his cloak like the belly of a fish. Another pulled down over his face a huge piece of felt, cut like a sombrero; this felt had no hole for a pipe, thus indicating the wearer to be a man of letters.

On the principle that a man's vest is a child's cloak, the child was wrapped over his rags in a sailor's jacket, which descended to his knees.

By his height you would have guessed him to be a boy of ten or eleven; his feet were bare. The crew of the hooker was composed of a captain and two sailors.

The hooker had apparently come from Spain, and was about to return thither. She was beyond a doubt engaged in a stealthy service from one coast to the other.

The persons embarking in her whispered among themselves.

The whispering interchanged by these creatures was of composite sound—now a word of Spanish, then of German, then of French, then of Gaelic, at times of Basque. It was either a patois or a slang. They appeared to be of all nations, and yet of the same band.

The motley group appeared to be a company of comrades, perhaps a gang of accomplices.

The crew was probably of their brotherhood. Community of object was visible in the embarkation.

Had there been a little more light, and if you could have looked at them attentively, you might have perceived on these people rosaries and scapulars half-hidden under their rags; one of the semi-women mingling in the group had a rosary almost equal for the size of its beads to that of a dervish, and easy to recognize for an Irish one made at Llanymthefry, which is also called Llanandriffy.

You might also have observed, had it not been so dark, a figure of Our Lady and Child carved and gilt on the bow of the hooker. It was probably that of the Basque Notre Dame, a sort of Panagia of the old Cantabri. Under this image, which occupied the position of a figure-head, was a lantern, which at this moment was not lighted—an excess of caution which implied an extreme desire of concealment. This lantern was evidently for two purposes. When a-light, it burned before the Virgin, and at the same time illumined the sea, a beacon doing duty as a taper.

Under the bowsprit the cut-water, long, curved, and sharp, came out in front like the horn of a crescent. At the top of the cut-water, and at the feet of the Virgin, a kneeling angel, with folded wings, leaned her back against the stem, and looked through a spy-glass at the horizon. The angel was gilded like Our Lady. In the cut-water were holes and openings to let the waves pass through, which afforded an opportunity for gilding and arabesques.

Under the figure of the Virgin was written, in gilt capitals, the word *Matutina*—the name of the vessel, not to be read just now on account of the darkness.

Amid the confusion of departure there were thrown down in disorder, at the foot of the cliff, the goods which the voyagers were to take with them, and which, by means of a plank serving as a bridge across, were being passed rapidly from the shore to the boat. Bags of biscuit, a cask of stock fish, a case of portable soup, three barrels—one of fresh

water, one of malt, one of tar—four or five bottles of ale, an old portmanteau buckled up by straps, trunks, boxes, a ball of tow for torches and signals. Such was the lading. These ragged people had valises, which seemed to indicate a roving life. Wandering rascals are obliged to own something; at times they would prefer to fly away like birds, but they cannot do so without abandoning the means of earning a livelihood. They of necessity possess boxes of tools and instruments of labor, whatever their errant trade may be. Those of whom we speak were dragging their baggage with them, often an encumbrance.

It was not easy to bring these movables to the bottom of the cliff. This, however, revealed the intention of a definite departure.

No time was lost; there was one continued passing to and fro from the shore to the vessel, and from the vessel to the shore; each one took his share of the work; one carried a bag, another a chest. Those amidst the promiscuous company who were possibly or probably women, worked like the rest. They overloaded the child.

It was doubtful if the child's father or mother were in the group; no sign of life was vouchsafed him. They made him work, nothing more. He appeared not a child in a family, but a slave in a tribe. He waited on every one, and no one spoke to him.

However, he made haste, and, like the others of this mysterious troop, he seemed to have but one thought—to embark as quickly as possible. Did he know why? probably not, he hurried mechanically because he saw the others hurry.

The hooker was decked. The stowing of the lading in the hold was quickly finished, and the moment to put off arrived. The last case had been carried over the gangway, and nothing was left to embark but the men. The two objects among the group who seemed women were already on board; six, the child among them, were still on the low platform of the cliff. A movement of departure was made in the vessel, the captain seized the helm, a sailor took up an axe to cut the hawser; to cut is an evidence of haste; when there is time it is unknotted.

"*Andamos*," said, in a low voice, he who appeared chief of the six, and who had the spangles on his tatters. The child rushed towards the plank in order to be the first to pass. As he placed his foot on it, two of the men hurried by, at the risk of throwing him into the water, got in before him, and passed on; the fourth drove him back with his fist and followed the third; the fifth, who was the chief, bounded into rather than entered the vessel, and, as he jumped in, kicked back the plank, which fell into the sea, a stroke of the hatchet cut the moorings, the helm was put up, the vessel left the shore, and the child remained on land.

CHAPTER III

ALONE

THE child remained motionless on the rock, with his eyes fixed; no calling out; no appeal. Though this was unexpected by him, he spoke not a word. The same silence reigned in the vessel. No cry from the child to the men—no farewell from the men to the child. There was on both sides a mute acceptance of the widening distance between them. It was like a separation of ghosts on the banks of the Styx. The child, as if nailed to the rock, which the high tide was beginning to bathe, watched the departing bark. It seemed as if he realized his position. What did he realize?—Darkness.

A moment later, the hooker gained the neck of the creek, and entered it. Against the clear sky the masthead was visible, rising above the split blocks between which the strait wound as between two walls. The truck wandered to the summit of the rocks and appeared to run into them. Then it was seen no more—all was over—the bark had gained the sea.

The child watched its disappearance—he was astounded but dreamy.

His stupefaction was complicated by a sense of the dark reality of existence. It seemed as if there were experience in this dawning being. Did he, perchance, already exercise judgment? Experience coming too early constructs, sometimes, in the obscure depths of a child's mind, some dangerous balance—we know not what—in which the poor little soul weighs God.

Feeling himself innocent, he yielded. There was no complaint—the irreproachable does not reproach.

His rough expulsion drew from him no sign—he suffered a sort of internal stiffening. The child did not bow under this sudden blow of

fate, which seemed to put an end to his existence ere it had well begun; he received the thunderstroke standing.

It would have been evident to any one who could have seen his astonishment unmixed with dejection, that, in the group which abandoned him, there was nothing which loved him, nothing which he loved.

Brooding, he forgot the cold. Suddenly the wave wetted his feet —the tide was flowing; a gust passed through his hair—the north wind was rising. He shivered. There came over him, from head to foot, the shudder of awakening.

He cast his eyes about him.

He was alone.

Up to this day there had never existed for him any other men than those who were now in the hooker. Those men had just stolen away.

Let us add what seems a strange thing to state. Those men, the only ones he knew, were unknown to him.

He could not have said who they were. His childhood had been passed among them, without his having the consciousness of being of them. He was in juxtaposition to them, nothing more.

He had just been—forgotten—by them.

He had no money about him, no shoes to his feet, scarcely a garment to his body, not even a piece of bread in his pocket.

It was winter—it was night. It would be necessary to walk several leagues before a human habitation could be reached.

He did not know where he was.

He knew nothing, unless it was that those who had come with him to the brink of the sea had gone away without him.

He felt himself put outside the pale of life.

He felt that man failed him.

He was ten years old.

The child was in a desert, between depths where he saw the night rising, and depths where he heard the waves murmur.

He stretched his little thin arms and yawned.

Then, suddenly, as one who makes up his mind, bold, and throwing off his numbness—with the agility of a squirrel—or perhaps of an acrobat—he turned his back on the creek, and set himself to climb up the cliff. He escaladed the path, left it, returned to it, quick and venturous. He was hurrying landward, just as though he had a destination marked out; nevertheless he was going nowhere.

He hastened without an object—a fugitive before Fate.

To climb is the function of a man; to clamber is that of an animal —he did both. As the slopes of Portland face southward, there was scarcely any snow on the path; the intensity of cold had, however,

frozen that snow into dust very troublesome to the walker. The child freed himself of it. His man's jacket, which was too big for him, complicated matters, and got in his way. Now and then on an overhanging crag or in a declivity he came upon a little ice, which caused him to slip down. Then, after hanging some moments over the precipice, he would catch hold of a dry branch or projecting stone. Once he came on a vein of slate, which suddenly gave way under him, letting him down with it. Crumbling slate is treacherous. For some seconds the child slid like a tile on a roof; he rolled to the extreme edge of the decline; a tuft of grass which he clutched at the right moment saved him. He was as mute in sight of the abyss as he had been in sight of the men; he gathered himself up and re-ascended silently. The slope was steep; so he had to zig-zag in ascending. The precipice grew in the darkness; the vertical rock had no ending.

It receded before the child in the distance of its height. As the child ascended, so seemed the summit to ascend. While he clambered he looked up at the dark entablature placed like a barrier between heaven and him. At last he reached the top.

He jumped on the level ground, or rather landed, for he rose from the precipice.

Scarcely was he on the cliff when he began to shiver. He felt in his face that bite of the night, the north wind. The bitter northwester was blowing; he tightened his rough sailor's jacket about his chest.

It was a good coat, called in ship language a sou'-wester, because that sort of stuff allows little of the south-westerly rain to penetrate.

The child, having gained the tableland, stopped, placed his feet firmly on the frozen ground and looked about him.

Behind him was the sea; in front the land; above, the sky—but a sky without stars; an opaque mist masked the zenith.

On reaching the summit of the rocky wall he found himself turned towards the land, and looked at it attentively. It lay before him as far as the sky-line, flat, frozen, and covered with snow. Some tufts of heather shivered in the wind. No roads were visible. Nothing, not even a shepherd's cot. Here and there, pale, spiral vortices might be seen, which were whirls of fine snow, snatched from the ground by the wind and blown away. Successive undulations of ground become suddenly misty, rolled themselves into the horizon. The great dull plains were lost under the white fog. Deep silence. It spread like infinity, and was hush as the tomb.

The child turned again towards the sea.

The sea, like the land, was white, the one with snow, the other with

foam. There is nothing so melancholy as the light produced by this double whiteness.

Certain lights of night are very clearly cut in their hardness; the sea was like steel, the cliff like ebony. From the height where the child was, the bay of Portland appeared almost like a geographical map, pale, in a semicircle of hills. There was something dreamlike in that nocturnal landscape—a wan disk belted by a dark crescent. The moon sometimes has a similar appearance. From cape to cape, along the whole coast, not a single spark indicating a hearth with a fire, not a lighted window, not an inhabited house was to be seen. As in heaven so on earth, no light. Not a lamp below, not a star above. Here and there came sudden risings in the great expanse of waters in the gulf, as the wind disarranged and wrinkled the vast sheet. The hooker was still visible in the bay as she fled.

It was a black triangle gliding over the livid waters.

Far away the waste of waters stirred confusedly in the ominous clear-obscure of immensity. The *Matutina* was making quick way. She seemed to grow smaller every minute. Nothing appears so rapid as the flight of a vessel melting into the distance of ocean.

Suddenly she lit the lantern at her prow. Probably the darkness falling round her made those on board uneasy, and the pilot thought it necessary to throw light on the waves. This luminous point, a spark seen from afar, clung like a corpse light to the high and long black form. You would have said it was a shroud raised up and moving in the middle of the sea, under which some one wandered with a star in his hand.

A storm threatened in the air; the child took no account of it, but a sailor would have trembled. It was that moment of preliminary anxiety, when it seems as though the elements are changing into persons, and one is about to witness the mysterious transfiguration of the wind into the windgod. The sea becomes Ocean; its power reveals itself as Will: that which one takes for a thing, is a soul. It will become visible. Hence the terror. The soul of man fears to be thus confronted with the soul of nature.

Chaos was about to appear. The wind rolling back the fog, and making a stage of the clouds behind, set the scene for that fearful drama of wave and winter, which is called a Snow-storm. Vessels putting back hove in sight. For some minutes past the roads had no longer been deserted. Every instant troubled barks hastening towards an anchorage appeared from behind the capes; some were doubling Portland Bill, the others St. Alban's Head. From afar ships were running in. It was a race for refuge. Southwards the darkness

thickened, and clouds, full of night, bordered on the sea. The weight of the tempest hanging overhead made a dreary lull on the waves. It certainly was no time to sail. Yet the hooker had sailed.

She was steering due south. She was already out of the gulf, and



in the open sea. Suddenly there came a gust of wind. The *Matutina*, which was still clearly in sight, made all sail, as if resolved to profit by the hurricane. It was the nor'-wester, a wind sullen and angry. Its weight was felt instantly. The hooker, caught broadside on, staggered, but recovering held her course to sea. This indicated a flight rather than a voyage, less fear of sea than of land, and greater heed of pursuit from man than from wind.

The hooker, passing through every degree of diminution, sank into the horizon. The little star which she carried into shadow paled. More and more the hooker became amalgamated with the night, then disappeared.

This time for good and all.

At least the child seemed to understand it so; he ceased to look at the sea. His eyes turned back upon the plains, the wastes, the hills, towards the space where it might not be impossible to meet something living.

Into this unknown he set out.



CHAPTER IV

QUESTIONS



HAT kind of band was it which had left the child behind in its flight?

Were those fugitives Comprachicos?

We have already seen the account of the measures taken by William III., and passed by Parliament against the malefactors, male and female, called Comprachicos, otherwise Comprapequeños, otherwise Cheylas.

There are laws which disperse. The law acting against the Comprachicos determined, not only the Comprachicos, but vagabonds of all sorts, on a general flight.

It was the devil take the hindmost. The greater number of the Comprachicos returned to Spain; many of them, as we have said, being Basques.

The law for the protection of children had at first this strange result: it caused many children to be abandoned.

The immediate effect of the penal statute was to produce a crowd of children, found or rather lost. Nothing is easier to understand. Every wandering gang containing a child was liable to suspicion. The mere fact of the child's presence was in itself a denunciation.

"They are very likely Comprachicos." Such was the first idea of the sheriff, of the bailiff, of the constable. Hence arrest and inquiry. People simply unfortunate, reduced to wander and to beg, were seized with a terror of being taken for Comprachicos, although they were nothing of the kind. But the weak have grave misgivings of possible errors in justice. Besides, these vagabond families are very easily scared. The accusation against the Comprachicos was that they traded in other people's children. But the promiscuousness caused by poverty

and indigence is such that at times it might have been difficult for a father and mother to prove a child their own.

How came you by this child? how were they to prove that they held it from God? The child became a peril—they got rid of it. To fly unencumbered was easier; the parents resolved to lose it—now in a wood, now on a strand, now down a well.

Children were found drowned in cisterns.

Let us add that, in imitation of England, all Europe henceforth hunted down the Comprachicos. The impulse of pursuit was given. There is nothing like belling the cat. From this time forward the desire to seize them made rivalry and emulation among the police of all countries, and the alguazil was not less keenly watchful than the constable.

One could still read, twenty-three years ago, on a stone of the gate of Otero, an untranslatable inscription—the words of the code outraging propriety. In it, however, the shade of difference which existed between the buyers and the stealers of children is very strongly marked. Here is part of the inscription in somewhat rough Castilian, *Aqui quedan las orejas de los Comprachicos, y las bolsas de los robaniños, mientras que se van ellos al trabajo de mar.* You see the confiscation of ears, etc., did not prevent the owners going to the galleys. Whence followed a general rout among all vagabonds. They started frightened; they arrived trembling. On every shore in Europe their furtive advent was watched. Impossible for such a band to embark with a child, since to disembark with one was dangerous.

To lose the child was much simpler of accomplishment.

And this child, of whom we have caught a glimpse in the shadow of the solitudes of Portland, by whom had he been cast away?

To all appearance by Comprachicos.

CHAPTER V

THE TREE OF HUMAN INVENTION

IT might be about seven o'clock in the evening. The wind was now diminishing, a sign, however, of a violent recurrence impending. The child was on the table-land at the extreme south point of Portland.

Portland is a peninsula; but the child did not know what a peninsula is, and was ignorant even of the name of Portland. He knew but one thing, which is, that one can walk until one drops down. An idea is a guide; he had no idea. They had brought him there, and left him there. *They* and *there.* These two enigmas represented his doom. *They*, were humankind. *There*, was the universe. For him, in all creation there was absolutely no other basis to rest on but the little piece of ground where he placed his heel, ground hard and cold to his naked feet. In the great twilight world, open on all sides, what was there for the child? Nothing.

He walked towards this Nothing. Around him was the vastness of human desertion.

He crossed the first plateau diagonally, then a second, then a third. At the extremity of each plateau the child came upon a break in the ground. The slope was sometimes steep, but always short; the high, bare plains of Portland resemble great flagstones overlapping each other. The south side seems to enter under the protruding slab, the north side rises over the next one; these made ascents, which the child stepped over nimbly. From time to time he stopped, and seemed to hold counsel with himself. The night was becoming very dark. His radius of sight was contracting. He now only saw a few steps before him.

All of a sudden he stopped, listened for an instant, and with an almost imperceptible nod of satisfaction, turned quickly and directed

his steps towards an eminence of moderate height, which he dimly perceived on his right, at the point of the plain nearest the cliff. There was on the eminence a shape which in the mist looked like a tree. The child had just heard a noise in this direction, which was the noise neither of the wind nor of the sea, nor was it the cry of animals. He thought that some one was there, and in a few strides he was at the foot of the hillock.

In truth, some one was there.

That which had been indistinct on the top of the eminence was now visible. It was something like a great arm thrust straight out of the ground; at the upper extremity of the arm a sort of forefinger, supported from beneath by the thumb, pointed out horizontally; the arm, the thumb, and the forefinger drew a square against the sky. At the point of juncture of this peculiar finger and this peculiar thumb, there was a line, from which hung something black and shapeless. The line moving in the wind sounded like a chain.

This was the noise the child had heard. Seen closely, the line was that which the noise indicated, a chain—a single chain cable.

By that mysterious law of amalgamation which throughout nature causes appearances to exaggerate realities, the place, the hour, the mist, the mournful sea, the cloudy turmoils on the distant horizon, added to the effect of this figure, and made it seem enormous.

The mass linked to the chain presented the appearance of a scabbard. It was swaddled like a child, and long like a man. There was a round thing at its summit, about which the end of the chain was rolled. The scabbard was riven asunder at the lower end, and shreds of flesh hung out between the rents.

A feeble breeze stirred the chain, and that which hung to it swayed gently. The passive mass obeyed the vague motions of space. It was an object to inspire indescribable dread. Horror, which disproportions everything, blurred its dimensions while retaining its shape. It was a condensation of darkness, which had a defined form. Night was above and within the spectre; it was a prey of ghastly exaggeration. Twilight and moon-rise, stars setting behind the cliff, floating things in space, the clouds, winds from all quarters, had ended by penetrating into the composition of this visible nothing. The species of log hanging in the wind partook of the impersonality diffused far over sea and sky, and the darkness completed this phase of the *thing* which had once been a man.

It was that which is no longer.

To be nought but a remainder! Such a thing is beyond the power of language to express. To exist no more, yet to persist; to be in the

abyss, yet out of it; to re-appear above death as if indissoluble. There is a certain amount of impossibility mixed with such reality. Thence comes the inexpressible. This being—was it a being? This black witness was a remainder, and an awful remainder—a remainder of what? Of nature first, and then of society. Zero, and yet total.

The lawless inclemency of the weather held it at its will; the deep oblivion of solitude environed it; it was given up to unknown chances; it was without defense against the darkness, which did with it what it willed. It was forever the patient; it submitted; the hurricane (that ghastly conflict of winds) was upon it.

The spectre was given over to pillage. It underwent the horrible outrage of rotting in the open air; it was an outlaw of the tomb. There was no peace for it even in annihilation: in the summer it fell away into dust, in the winter into mud. Death should be veiled, the grave should have its reserve. Here was neither veil nor reserve: but cynically avowed putrefaction. It is effrontery in death to display its work, it offends all the calmness of shadow when it does its task outside its laboratory, the grave.

This dead being had been stripped. To strip one already stripped—relentless act! His marrow was no longer in his bones; his entrails were no longer in his body; his voice was no longer in his throat. A corpse is a pocket which death turns inside out and empties. If he ever had an I, where was the I? There still, perchance, and this was fearful to think of. Something wandering about something in chains—can one imagine a more mournful lineament in the darkness?

Realities exist here below which serve as issues to the unknown, which seem to facilitate the egress of speculation, and at which hypothesis snatches. Conjecture has its *compelle intrare*. In passing by certain places and before certain objects one cannot help stopping—a prey to dreams into the realms of which the mind enters. In the invisible there are dark portals ajar. No one could have met this dead man without meditating.

In the vastness of dispersion he was wearing silently away. He had had blood which had been drunk, skin which had been eaten, flesh which had been stolen. Nothing had passed him by without taking somewhat from him. December had borrowed cold of him; midnight, horror; the iron, rust; the plague, miasma; the flowers, perfume. His slow disintegration was a toll paid to all—a toll of the corpse to the storm, to the rain, to the dew, to the reptiles, to the birds. All the dark hands of night had rifled the dead.

He was, indeed, an inexpressibly strange tenant, a tenant of the darkness. He was on a plain and on a hill, and *he was not*. He was

palpable, yet vanished. He was a shadow accruing to the night. After the disappearance of day into the vast of silent obscurity, he became in lugubrious accord with all around him. By his mere presence he increased the gloom of the tempest, and the calm of stars. The unutterable which is in the desert was condensed in him. Waif of an unknown fate, he commingled with all the wild secrets of the night. There was in his mystery a vague reverberation of all enigmas.

About him life seemed sinking to its lowest depths. Certainty and confidence appeared to diminish in his environs. The shiver of the brushwood and the grass, a desolate melancholy, an anxiety in which a conscience seemed to lurk, appropriated with tragic force the whole landscape to that black figure suspended by the chain. The presence of a spectre in the horizon is an aggravation of solitude.

He was a Sign. Having unappeasable winds around him, he was implacable. Perpetual shuddering made him terrible. Fearful to say, he seemed to be a centre in space, with something immense leaning on him. Who can tell? Perhaps that equity, half seen and set at defiance, which trascends human justice. There was in his unburied continuance the vengeance of men and his own vengeance. He was a testimony in the twilight and the waste. He was in himself a disquieting substance, since we tremble before the substance which is the ruined habitation of the soul. For dead matter to trouble us, it must once have been tenanted by spirit. He denounced the law of earth to the law of Heaven. Placed there by man, he there awaited God. Above him floated, blended with all the vague distortions of the cloud and the wave, boundless dreams of shadow.

Who could tell what sinister mysteries lurked behind this phantom? The illimitable circumscribed by nought, nor tree, nor roof, nor passer-by, was around the dead man. When the unchangeable broods over us, when Heaven, the abyss, the life, grave, and eternity appear patent, then it is we feel that all is inaccessible, all is forbidden, all is sealed. When infinity opens to us, terrible indeed is the closing of the gate behind.

CHAPTER VI

STRUGGLE BETWEEN DEATH AND NIGHT



HE child was before this thing, dumb, wondering, and with eyes fixed.

To a man it would have been a gibbet; to the child it was an apparition.

Where a man would have seen a corpse the child saw a spectre.

Besides, he did not understand.

The attractions of the obscure are manifold. There was one on the summit of that hill. The child took a step, then another; he ascended, wishing all the while to descend; and approached, wishing all the while to retreat.

Bold, yet trembling, he went close up to survey the spectre.

When he got close under the gibbet, he looked up and examined it.

The spectre was tarred; here and there it shone. The child distinguished the face. It was coated over with pitch; and this mask, which appeared viscous and sticky, varied its aspect with the night shadows. The child saw the mouth, which was a hole; the nose, which was a hole; the eyes, which were holes. The body was wrapped, and apparently corded up, in coarse canvas, soaked in naphtha. The canvas was mouldy and torn. A knee protruded through it. A rent disclosed the ribs; partly corpse, partly skeleton. The face was the color of earth; slugs, wandering over it, had traced across it vague ribands of silver. The canvas, glued to the bones, showed in reliefs like the robe of a statue. The skull, cracked and fractured, gaped like a rotten fruit. The teeth were still human, for they retained a laugh. The remains of a cry seemed to murmur in the open mouth. There were a few hairs of beard on the cheek. The inclined head had an air of attention.

Some repairs had recently been done; the face had been tarred

afresh, as well as the ribs and the knee which protruded from the canvas. The feet hung out below.

Just underneath, in the grass, were two shoes, which snow and rain had rendered shapeless. These shoes had fallen from the dead man.

The barefooted child looked at the shoes.

The wind, which had become more and more restless, was now and then interrupted by those pauses which foretell the approach of a storm. For the last few minutes it had altogether ceased to blow. The corpse no longer stirred; the chain was as motionless as a plumb line.

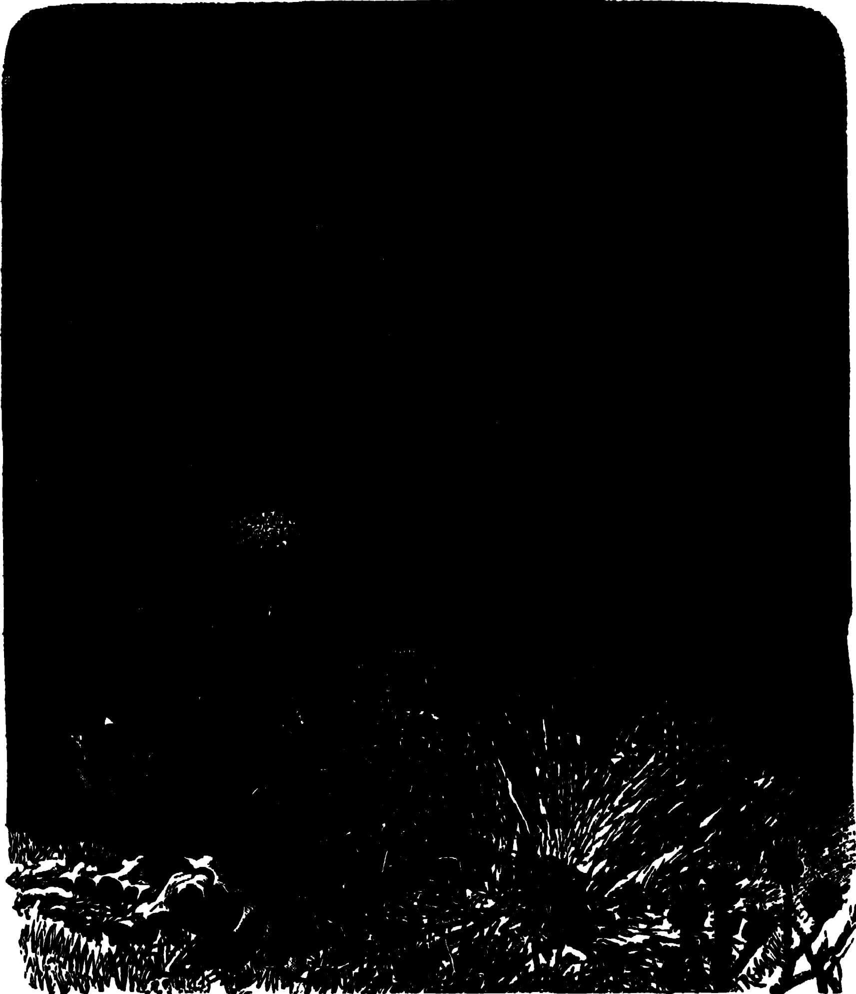
Like all new-comers into life, and taking into account the peculiar influences of his fate, the child no doubt felt within him that awakening of ideas characteristic of early years, which endeavors to open the brain and which resembles the pecking of the young bird in the egg. But all that there was in his little consciousness just then was resolved into stupor. Excess of sensation has the effect of too much oil, and ends by putting out thought. A man would have put himself questions; the child put himself none; he only looked.

The tar gave the face a wet appearance; drops of pitch, congealed in what had once been the eyes, produced the effect of tears. However, thanks to the pitch, the ravage of death, if not annulled, was visibly slackened, and reduced to the least possible decay. That which was before the child was a thing of which care was taken; the man was evidently precious. They had not cared to keep him alive, but they cared to keep him dead.

The gibbet was old, worm-eaten, although strong, and had been in use many years.

It was an immemorial custom in England to tar smugglers. They were hanged on the sea-board, coated over with pitch and left swinging. Examples must be made in public, and tarred examples last longest. The tar was mercy; by renewing it they were spared making too many fresh examples. They placed gibbets from point to point along the coast, as nowadays they do beacons. The hanged man did duty as a lantern. After his fashion, he guided his comrades, the smugglers. The smugglers from far out at sea perceived the gibbets. There is one, first warning; another, second warning. It did not stop smuggling; but public order is made up of such things. The fashion lasted in England up to the beginning of this century. In 1822 three men were still to be seen hanging in front of Dover Castle. But, for that matter, the preserving process was employed not only with smugglers. England turned robbers, incendiaries and murderers to the same account.

Jack Painter, who set fire to the government storehouses at Portsmouth, was hanged and tarred in 1776. L'Abbé Coyer, who describes him as Jean le Peintre, saw him again in 1777; Jack Painter was hanging above the ruin he had made, and was re-tarred from time to time. His corpse lasted—I had almost said lived—nearly fourteen years. It was



still doing good service in 1788; in 1790, however, they were obliged to replace it by another. The Egyptians used to value the mummy of the king; a plebeian mummy can also, it appears, be of service.

The wind, having great power on the hill, had swept it of all its snow. Herbage re-appeared on it, interspersed here and there with a few thistles; the hill was covered by that close short grass which grows

by the sea, and causes the tops of cliffs to resemble green cloth. Under the gibbet, on the very spot over which hung the feet of the executed criminal, was a long and thick tuft, uncommon on such poor soil. Corpses, crumbling there for centuries past, accounted for the beauty of the grass. Earth feeds on man.

A dreary fascination held the child; he remained there open-mouthed. He only dropped his head a moment when a nettle, which felt like an insect, stung his leg; then he looked up again—he looked above him at the face which looked down on him. It appeared to regard him the more steadfastly because it had no eyes. It was a comprehensive glance, having an indescribable fixedness in which there was both light and darkness, and which emanated from the skull and teeth, as well as the empty arches of the brow. The whole head of a dead man seems to have vision, and this is awful. No eyeball, yet we feel that we are looked at. A horror of worms.

Little by little the child himself was becoming an object of terror. He no longer moved. Torpor was coming over him. He did not perceive that he was losing consciousness—he was becoming benumbed and lifeless. Winter was silently delivering him over to night. There is something of the traitor in winter. The child was all but a statue. The coldness of stone was penetrating his bones; darkness, that reptile, was crawling over him. The drowsiness resulting from snow creeps over man like a dim tide. The child was being slowly invaded by a stagnation resembling that of the corpse. He was falling asleep.

On the hand of sleep is the finger of death. The child felt himself seized by that hand. He was on the point of falling under the gibbet. He no longer knew whether he was standing upright.

The end always impending, no transition between to be and not to be, the return into the crucible, the slip possible every minute. Such is the precipice which is Creation.

Another instant, the child and the dead, life in sketch and life in ruin, would be confounded in the same obliteration.

The spectre appeared to understand, and not to wish it. Of a sudden it stirred. One would have said it was warning the child. It was the wind beginning to blow again. Nothing stranger than this dead man in movement.

The corpse at the end of the chain, pushed by the invisible gust, took an oblique attitude; rose to the left, then fell back, re-ascended to the right, and fell and rose with slow and mournful precision. A weird game of see-saw. It seemed as though one saw in the darkness the pendulum of the clock of Eternity.

This continued for some time. The child felt himself waking up at

the sight of the dead; through his increasing numbness he experienced a distinct sense of fear.

The chain at every oscillation made a grinding sound, with hideous regularity. It appeared to take breath, and then to resume. This grinding was like the cry of a grasshopper.

An approaching squall is heralded by sudden gusts of wind. All at once the breeze increased into a gale. The corpse emphasized its dismal oscillations. It no longer swung, it tossed; the chain, which had been grinding, now shrieked. It appeared that its shriek was heard. If it was an appeal, it was obeyed. From the depths of the horizon came the sound of a rushing noise.

It was the noise of wings.

An incident occurred, a stormy incident, peculiar to graveyards and solitudes. It was the arrival of a flight of ravens. Black flying specks pricked the clouds, pierced through the mist, increased in size, came near, amalgamated, thickened, hastening towards the hill, uttering cries. It was like the approach of a Legion. The winged vermin of the darkness alighted on the gibbet; the child, scared, drew back.

Swarms obey words of command; the birds crowded on the gibbet, not one was on the corpse. They were talking among themselves. The croaking was frightful. The howl, the whistle and the roar, are signs of life; the croak is a satisfied acceptance of putrefaction. In it you can fancy you hear the tomb breaking silence. The croak is night-like in itself.

The child was frozen even more by terror than by cold.

Then the ravens held silence. One of them perched on the skeleton. This was a signal; they all precipitated themselves upon it. There was a cloud of wings, then all their feathers closed up, and the hanged man disappeared under a swarm of black blisters struggling in the obscurity. Just then the corpse moved. Was it the corpse? Was it the wind? It made a frightful bound. The hurricane, which was increasing, came to its aid. The phantom fell into convulsions. The squall, already blowing with full lungs, laid hold of it, and moved it about in all directions.

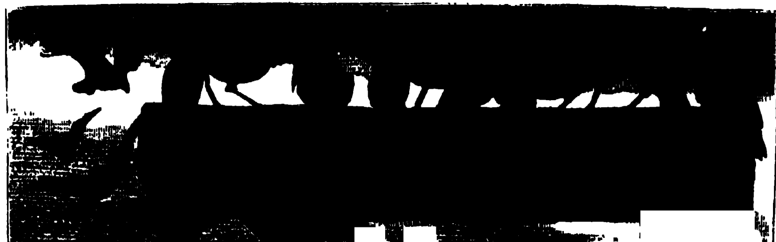
It became horrible; it began to struggle. An awful puppet, with a gibbet chain for a string. Some humorist of night must have seized the string, and been playing with the mummy. It turned and leapt as if it would fain dislocate itself; the birds frightened, flew off. It was like an explosion of all those unclean creatures. Then they returned; and a struggle began.

The dead man seemed possessed with hideous vitality. The winds raised him as though they meant to carry him away. He seemed strug-

gling and making efforts to escape, but his iron collar held him back. The birds adapted themselves to all his movements, retreating, then striking again, scared but desperate. On one side a strange flight was attempted, on the other the pursuit of a chained man. The corpse, impelled by every spasm of the wind, had shocks, starts, fits of rage: it went, it came, it rose, it fell, driving back the scattered swarm. The dead man was a club, the swarms were dust. The fierce, assailing flock would not leave their hold, and grew stubborn; the man, as if maddened by the cluster of beaks, redoubled his blind chastisement of space. It was like the blows of a stone held in a sling. At times the corpse was covered by talons and wings; then it was free. There were disappearances of the horde; then sudden furious returns. A frightful torment continuing after life was past. The birds seemed frenzied. The airholes of hell must surely give passage to such swarms. Thrusting of claws, thrusting of beaks, croakings, rendings of shreds no longer flesh, creakings of the gibbet, shudderings of the skeleton, jingling of the chain, the voices of the storm and tumult. What conflict more fearful? A hobgoblin warring with devils! A combat with a spectre!

At times the storm redoubling its violence, the hanged man revolved on his own pivot, turning every way at once towards the swarm, as if he wished to run after the birds; his teeth seemed to try and bite them. The wind was for him, the chain against him. It was as if black deities were mixing themselves up in the fray. The hurricane was in the battle. As the dead man turned himself about, the flock of birds wound round him spirally. It was a whirl in a whirlwind. A great roar was heard from below. It was the sea.

The child saw this nightmare. Suddenly he trembled in all his limbs; a shiver thrilled his frame; he staggered, tottered, nearly fell, recovered himself, pressed both hands to his forehead, as if he felt his forehead a support; then, haggard, his hair streaming in the wind, descending the hill with long strides, his eyes closed, himself almost a phantom, he took flight, leaving behind that torment in the night.



CHAPTER VII

THE NORTH POINT OF PORTLAND

HE ran until he was breathless, at random, desperate, over the plain into the snow, into space. His flight warmed him. He needed it. Without the run and the fright he had died.

When his breath failed him, he stopped, but he dared not look back. He fancied that the birds would pursue him, that the dead man had undone his chain and was perhaps hurrying behind him, and no doubt the gibbet itself was descending the hill, running after the dead man; he feared to see these things if he turned his head.

When he had somewhat recovered his breath, he resumed his flight.

To account for facts does not belong to childhood. He received impressions which were magnified by terror, but he did not link them together in his mind, nor form any conclusion on them. He was going on, no matter how or where; he ran in agony and difficulty as one in a dream. During the three hours or so since he had been deserted, his onward progress, still vague, had changed its purpose. At first it was a search, now it was a flight. He no longer felt hunger nor cold—he felt fear. One instinct had given place to another. To escape was now his whole thought—to escape from what? From everything. On all sides life seemed to enclose him like a horrible wall. If he could have fled from all things, he would have done so. But children know nothing of that breaking from prison which is called suicide. He was running. He ran on for an indefinite time; but fear dies with lack of breath.

All at once, as if seized by a sudden accession of energy and intelligence, he stopped. One would have said he was ashamed of running away. He drew himself up, stamped his foot, and, with head erect, looked round. There was no longer hill, nor gibbet, nor flights of crows. The fog had resumed possession of the horizon. The child pursued his way: he now no longer ran but walked. To say that meeting with a

corpse had made a man of him would be to limit the manifold and confused impression which possessed him. There was in his impression much more and much less. The gibbet, a mighty trouble in the rudiment of comprehension, nascent in his mind, still seemed to him an apparition; but a trouble overcome is strength gained, and he felt himself stronger. Had he been of an age to probe self, he would have detected within him a thousand other germs of meditation; but the reflection of children is shapeless, and the utmost they feel is the bitter aftertaste of that which, obscure to them, the man later on calls indignation. Let us add that a child has the faculty of quickly accepting the conclusion of a sensation; the distant fading boundaries which amplify painful subjects, escape him. A child is protected by the limit of feebleness against emotions which are too complex. He sees the fact, and little else beside. The difficulty of being satisfied by half-ideas does not exist for him. It is not until later that experience comes, with its brief, to conduct the lawsuit of life. *Then* he confronts groups of facts which have crossed his path—the understanding cultivated and enlarged, draws comparisons—the memories of youth re-appear under the passions, like the traces of a palimpsest under the erasure; these memories form the bases of logic, and that which was a vision in the child's brain, becomes a syllogism in the man's. Experience is, however, various, and turns to good or evil according to natural disposition. With the good it ripens, with the bad it rots.

The child had run quite a quarter of a league, and walked another quarter, when suddenly he felt the craving of hunger. A thought which altogether eclipsed the hideous apparition on the hill occurred to him forcibly, that he must eat. Happily there is in man a brute which serves to lead him back to reality.

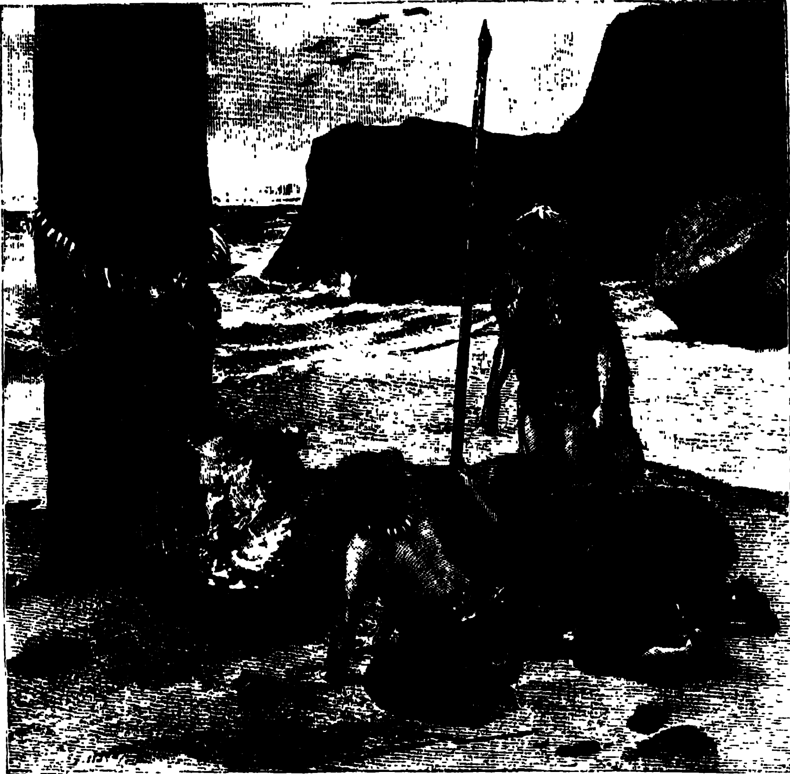
But what to eat, where to eat, how to eat?

He felt his pockets mechanically, well knowing that they were empty. Then he quickened his steps, without knowing whither he was going. He hastened towards a possible shelter. This faith in an inn is one of the convictions enrooted by God in man. To believe in a shelter is to believe in God.

However, in that plain of snow there was nothing like a roof. The child went on, and the waste continued bare as far as eye could see. There had never been a human habitation on the table-land. It was at the foot of the cliff, in holes in the rocks, that, lacking wood to build themselves huts, had dwelt long ago the aboriginal inhabitants, who had slings for arms, dried cow-dung for firing, for a god the idol Heil standing in a glade at Dorchester, and for trade the fishing of that false gray coral which the Gauls called *plin*, and the Greeks *Isidis plocamos*.

The child found his way as best he could. Destiny is made up of cross-roads. An option of path is dangerous. This little being had an early choice of doubtful chances.

He continued to advance, but although the muscles of his thighs seemed to be of steel, he began to tire. There were no tracks in the plain, or if there were any, the snow had obliterated them. Instinctively he inclined eastwards. Sharp stones had wounded his heels.



Had it been daylight, pink stains made by his blood might have been seen in the foot-prints he left in the snow.

He recognized nothing. He was crossing the plain of Portland from south to north, and it is probable that the band with which he had come, to avoid meeting any one, had crossed it from east to west: they had most likely sailed in some fisherman's or smuggler's boat, from a point on the coast of Uggescombe, such as St. Catherine's Cape, or Swanery, to Portland, to find the hooker which awaited them, and they must have landed in one of the creeks of Weston, and re-embarked in one of those of Easton. That direction was intersected by the one

the child was now following. It was impossible for him to recognize the road.

On the plain of Portland there are, here and there, raised strips of land, abruptly ended by the shore and cut perpendicular to the sea. The wandering child reached one of these culminating points and stopped on it, hoping that a larger space might reveal further indications. He tried to see around him. Before him, in place of an horizon, was a vast livid opacity. He looked at this attentively, and under the fixedness of his glance it became less indistinct. At the base of a distant fold of land towards the east, in the depths of that opaque lividity



(a moving and wan sort of precipice, which resembled a cliff of the night), crept and floated some vague black rents, some dim shreds of vapor. The pale opacity was fog, the black shreds were smoke. Where there is smoke there are men. The child turned his steps in that direction.

He saw some distance off a descent, and at the foot of the descent, among shapeless conformations of rock, blurred by the mist, what seemed to be either a sandbank or a tongue of land, joining probably to the plains of the horizon the table-land he had just crossed. It was evident he must pass that way.

He had, in fact, arrived at the Isthmus of Portland, a diluvian alluvium which is called Cheshil.

He began to descend the side of the plateau.

The descent was difficult and rough. It was (with less of ruggedness, however) the reverse of the ascent he had made on leaving the creek. Every ascent is balanced by a decline. After having clambered up, he crawled down.

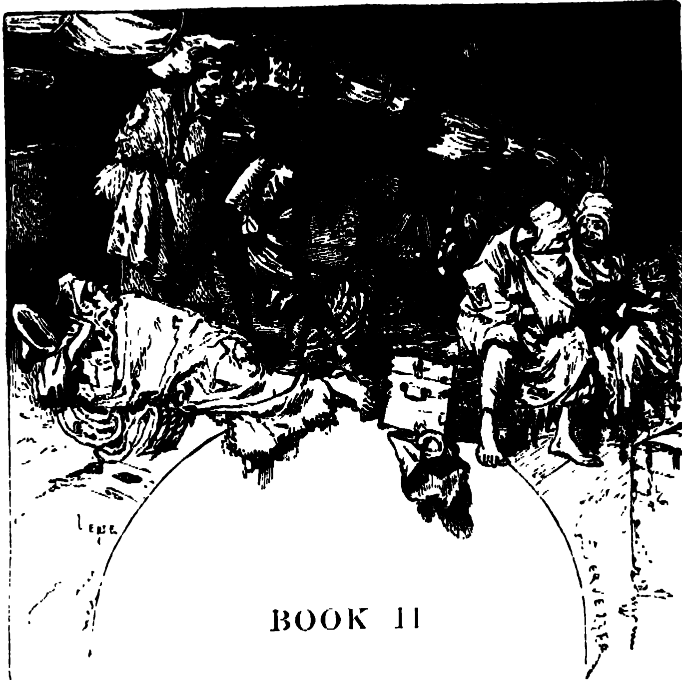
He leaped from one rock to another at the risk of a sprain, at the risk of falling into the vague depths below. To save himself when he slipped on the rock or on the ice, he caught hold of handfuls of weeds



and furze, thick with thorns, and their points ran into his fingers. At times he came on an easier declivity, taking breath as he descended; then came on the precipice again, and each step necessitated an expedient. In descending precipices, every movement solves a problem. One must be skillful under pain of death. These problems the child solved with an instinct which would have made him the admiration of apes and mountebanks. The descent was steep and long. Nevertheless he was coming to the end of it.

Little by little it was drawing nearer the moment when he should land on the Isthmus, of which from time to time he caught a glimpse. At intervals, while he bounded or dropped from rock to rock, he pricked

up his ears, his head erect, like a listening deer. He was hearkening to a diffused and faint uproar, far away to the left, like the deep note of a clarion. It was a commotion of winds, preceding that fearful north blast, which is heard rushing from the pole, like an inroad of trumpets. At the same time the child felt now and then on his brow, on his eyes, on his cheeks, something which was like the palms of cold hands being placed on his face. These were large frozen flakes, sown at first softly in space, then eddying, and heralding a snow-storm. The child was covered with them. The snow-storm, which for the last hour had been on the sea, was beginning to gain the land. It was slowly invading the plains. It was entering obliquely, by the north-west, the table-land of Portland.



BOOK II

THE HOOKER AT SEA

CHAPTER I

SUPERHUMAN LAWS



HE snow-storm is one of the mysteries of the ocean. It is the most obscure of things meteorological; obscure in every sense of the word. It is a mixture of fog and storm; and even in our days we cannot well account for the phenomenon. Hence many disasters.

We try to explain all things by the action of wind and wave; yet in the air there is a force which is not the wind, and in the waters a force which is not the wave. That force, both in the air and in the water, is effluvium. Air and water are two nearly identical liquid masses, entering into the composition of each other by condensation and dilatation, so that to breathe is to drink. Effluvium alone is fluid. The wind and the wave are only impulses; effluvium is a

current. The wind is visible in clouds, the wave is visible in foam; effluvium is invisible. From time to time, however, it says, "I am here." Its "I am here" is a clap of thunder.

The snow-storm offers a problem analogous to the dry fog. If the solution of the callina of the Spaniards, and the quobar of the Ethiopians be possible, assuredly that solution will be achieved by attentive observation of magnetic effluvium.

Without effluvium a crowd of circumstances would remain enigmatic. Strictly speaking, the changes in the velocity of the wind, varying from three feet per second to two hundred and twenty feet, would supply a reason for the variations of the waves rising from three inches in a calm sea to thirty-six feet in a raging one. Strictly speaking, the horizontal direction of the winds, even in a squall, enables us to understand how it is that a wave thirty feet high can be fifteen hundred feet long. But why are the waves of the Pacific four times higher near America than near Asia; that is to say, higher in the East than in the West? Why is the contrary true of the Atlantic? Why, under the Equator, are they highest in the middle of the sea? Wherefore these deviations in the swell of the ocean? This is what magnetic effluvium, combined with terrestrial rotation and sidereal attraction, can alone explain.

Is not this mysterious complication needed to explain an oscillation of the wind veering, for instance, by the west from S.E. to N.E., then suddenly returning in the same great curve from N.E. to S.E., so as to make in thirty-six hours a prodigious circuit of five hundred and sixty degrees? Such was the preface to the snow-storm of March 17, 1867.

The storm-waves of Australia reach a height of eighty feet; this fact is connected with the vicinity of the Pole. Storms in those latitudes result less from disorder of the winds than from submarine electrical discharges. In the year 1866 the transatlantic cable was disturbed at regular intervals in its working for two hours in the twenty-four, from noon to two o'clock, by a sort of intermittent fever. Certain compositions and decompositions of forces produce phenomena, and impose themselves on the calculations of the seaman under pain of shipwreck. The day that navigation, now a routine, shall become a mathematic, the day we shall, for instance, seek to know why it is that in our regions hot winds come sometimes from the north, and cold winds from the south; the day we shall understand that diminutions of temperature are proportionate to oceanic depths; the day we realize that the globe is a vast loadstone polarized in immensity, with two axes—an axis of rotation, and an axis of effluvium, intersecting each other at the centre of the earth, and that the magnetic poles turn round the geographical

poles; when those who risk life will choose to risk it scientifically; when men shall navigate assured from studied uncertainty; when the captain shall be a meteorologist; when the pilot shall be a chemist; then will many catastrophes be avoided. The sea is magnetic as much as aquatic: an ocean of unknown forces floats in the ocean of the waves, or, one might say, on the surface. Only to behold in the sea a mass of water is not to see it at all: the sea is an ebb and flow of fluid, as much as a flux and reflux of liquid. It is, perhaps, complicated by attractions even more than by hurricanes; molecular adhesion manifested among other phenomena by capillary attraction, although microscopic, takes in ocean, its place in the grandeur of immensity; and the wave of effluvium sometimes aids, sometimes counteracts, the wave of the air and the wave of the waters. He who is ignorant of electric law is ignorant of hydraulic law; for the one intermixes with the other. It is true there is no study more difficult nor more obscure; it verges on empiricism, just as astronomy verges on astrology; and yet without this study there is no navigation.

Having said this much, we will pass on.

One of the most dangerous components of the sea is the snow-storm. The snow-storm is above all things magnetic. The pole produces it as it produces the aurora borealis. It is in the fog of the one as in the light of the other; and in the flake of snow as in the streak of flame, effluvium is visible.

Storms are the nervous attacks and delirious frenzies of the sea. The sea has its ailments. Tempests may be compared to maladies. Some are mortal, others not; some may be escaped, others not. The snow-storm is supposed to be generally mortal. Jarabija, one of the pilots of Magellan, termed it * "a cloud issuing from the devil's sore side."

Surcouf said: *Il y a du trousse-galant dans cette tempête-là.*

The old Spanish navigators called this kind of squall *la nevada*, when it came with snow; *la helada* when it came with hail. According to them, bats fell from the sky, with the snow.

Snow-storms are characteristic of polar latitudes; nevertheless, at times they glide—one might almost say tumble—into our climates; so much ruin is mingled with the chances of the air.

The *Matutina*, as we have seen, plunged resolutely into the great hazard of the night, a hazard increased by the impending storm. She had encountered its menace with a sort of tragic audacity; nevertheless, it must be remembered that she had received due warning.

---

* *Una nube salida del malo lado del diablo.*

CHAPTER II

OUR FIRST ROUGH SKETCHES FILLED IN

WHILE the hooker was in the gulf of Portland, there was but little sea on; the ocean, if gloomy, was almost still, and the sky was yet clear. The wind took little effect on the vessel; the hooker hugged the cliff as closely as possible; it served as a screen to her.

There were ten on board the little Biscayan felucca, three men in crew, and seven passengers, of whom two were women. In the light of the open sea (which broadens twilight into day) all the figures on board were clearly visible. Besides they were not hiding now, they were all at ease, each one re-assumed his freedom of manner, spoke in his own note, showed his face: departure was to them a deliverance.

The motley nature of the group shone out. The women were of no age. A wandering life produces premature old age, and indigence is made up of wrinkles. One of them was a Basque of the Dry-ports. The other, with the large rosary, was an Irish-woman. They wore that air of indifference common to the wretched. They had squatted down close to each other when they got on board, on chests at the foot of the mast. They talked to each other. Irish and Basque are, as we have said, kindred languages. The Basque woman's hair was scented with onions and basil. The skipper of the hooker was a Basque of Guipuzcoa. One sailor was a Basque of the northern slope of the Pyrenees, the other was of the southern slope,—that is to say, they were of the same nation, although the first was French and the latter Spanish. The Basques recognize no official country. *Mi madre se llama Montaña*, my mother is called the mountain, as Zalareus, the muleteer, used to say. Of the five men who were with the two women, one was a Frenchman of Languedoc, one a Frenchman of Provence, one a Genoese; one an old man, he who wore the sombrero without a hole for a pipe,

appeared to be a German. The fifth, the chief, was a Basque of the Landes from Biscarrosse. It was he who, just as the child was going on board the hooker, had, with a kick of his heel, cast the plank into the sea. This man, robust, agile, sudden in movement, covered, as may be remembered, with trimmings, slashings, and glistening tinsel, could not keep in his place; he stooped down, rose up, and continually passed to and fro from one end of the vessel to the other, as if debating uneasily on what had been done and what was going to happen.

This chief of the band, the captain and the two men of the crew, all four Basques, spoke sometimes Basque, sometimes Spanish, sometimes French—these three languages being common on both slopes of the Pyrenees. But generally speaking, excepting the women, all talked something like French, which was the foundation of their slang. The French language, about this period, began to be chosen by the peoples as something intermediate between the excess of consonants in the north, and the excess of vowels in the south. In Europe, French was the language of commerce, and also of felony. It will be remembered that Gibby, a London thief, understood Cartouche.

The hooker, a fine sailer, was making quick way; still, ten persons, besides their baggage, were a heavy cargo for one of such light draught.

The fact of the vessel's aiding the escape of a band did not necessarily imply that the crew were accomplices. It was sufficient that the captain of the vessel was a *Vascongado*, and that the chief of the band was another. Among that race mutual assistance is a duty which admits of no exception. A Basque, as we have said, is neither Spanish nor French; he is Basque, and always and everywhere he must succor a Basque. Such is Pyrenean fraternity.

All the time the hooker was in the gulf, the sky, although threatening, did not frown enough to cause the fugitives any uneasiness. They were flying, they were escaping, they were brutally gay. One laughed, another sang; the laugh was dry but free, the song was low but careless.

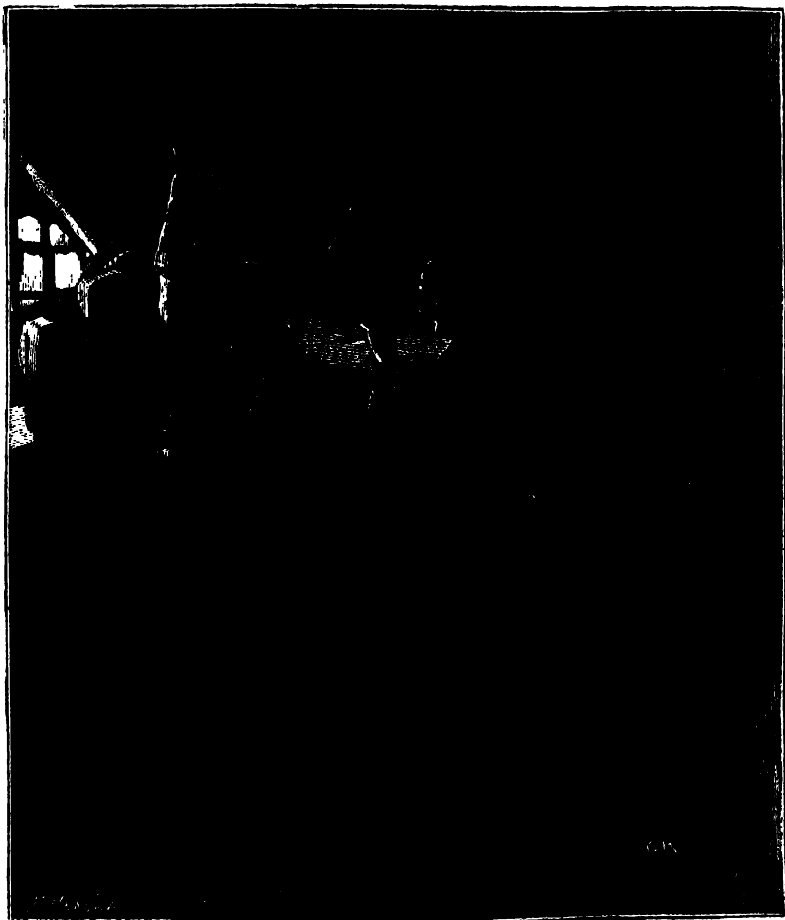
The Languedocian cried, "*Caoucagno!*" "*Cocagne*" expresses the highest pitch of satisfaction in Narbonne. He was a longshore sailor, a native of the waterside village of Gruissan, on the southern side of the Clappe, a bargeman rather than a mariner, but accustomed to work the reaches of the inlet of Bages, and to draw the drag-net full of fish over the salt sands of St. Lucie. He was of the race who wear a red cap, make complicated signs of the cross after the Spanish fashion, drink wine out of goat-skins, eat scraped ham, kneel down to blaspheme, and implore their patron saint with threats:—"Great saint, grant me what I ask, or I'll throw a stone at thy head, *ou té feg un pic.*" He might be, at need, a useful addition to the crew.

The Provençal in the caboose was blowing up a turf fire under an iron pot, and making broth. The broth was a kind of puchero, in which fish took the place of meat, and into which the Provençal threw chick peas, little bits of bacon cut in squares, and pods of red pimento; concessions made by the eaters of *bouillabaisse* to the eaters of *olla podrida*. One of the bags of provisions was beside him unpacked. He had lighted over his head an iron lantern, glazed with talc, which swung on a hook from the ceiling. By its side, on another hook, swung the weather-cock halcyon. There was a popular belief in those days that a dead halcyon, hung by the beak, always turned its breast to the quarter whence the wind was blowing. While he made the broth, the Provençal put the neck of a gourd into his mouth, and now and then swallowed a draught of aguardiente. It was one of those gourds covered with wicker, broad and flat, with handles, which used to be hung to the side by a strap, and which were then called hip-gourds. Between each gulp he mumbled one of those country songs of which the subject is nothing at all: a hollow road, a hedge; you see in the meadow, through a gap in the bushes, the shadow of a horse and cart, elongated in the sunset, and from time to time, above the hedge, the end of a fork loaded with hay appears and disappears—you want no more to make a song.

A departure, according to the bent of one's mind, is a relief or a depression. All seemed lighter in spirits excepting the old man of the band, the man with the hat that had no pipe.

This old man, who looked more German than anything else, although he had one of those unfathomable faces in which nationality is lost, was bald, and so grave that his baldness might have been a tonsure. Every time he passed before the Virgin on the prow, he raised his felt hat, so that you could see the swollen and senile veins of his skull. A sort of full gown, torn and threadbare, of brown Dorchester serge, but half hid his closely fitting coat, tight, compact, and hooked up to the neck like a cassock. His hands inclined to cross each other, and had the mechanical junction of habitual prayer. He had what might be called a wan countenance; for the countenance is above all things a reflection, and it is an error to believe that idea is colorless. That countenance was evidently the surface of a strange inner state, the result of a composition of contradictions, some tending to drift away in good, others in evil, and to an observer it was the revelation of one who was less and more than human—capable of falling below the scale of the tiger, or of rising above that of man. Such chaotic souls exist. There was something inscrutable in that face. Its secret reached the abstract. You felt that the man had known the foretaste of evil which

is the calculation, and the after-taste which is the zero. In his impassibility, which was perhaps only on the surface, were imprinted two petrifactions; the petrifaction of the heart proper to the hangman, and the petrifaction of the mind proper to the mandarin. One might have said (for the monstrous has its mode of being complete), that all things



were possible to him, even emotion. In every savant there is something of the corpse, and this man was a savant. Only to see him you caught science imprinted in the gestures of his body and in the folds of his dress. His was a fossil face, the serious cast of which was counteracted by that wrinkled mobility of the polyglot which verges on grimace. But a severe man withal; nothing of the hypocrite, nothing of the cynic. A tragic dreamer. He was one of those whom crime

leaves pensive; he had the brow of an incendiary tempered by the eyes of an archbishop. His sparse gray locks turned to white over his temples. The Christian was evident in him, complicated with the fatalism of the Turk. Chalkstones deformed his fingers, dissected by leanness. The stiffness of his tall frame was grotesque. He had his sea-legs, he walked slowly about the deck, not looking at any one, with an air decided and sinister. His eyeballs were vaguely filled with the fixed light of a soul studious of the darkness and afflicted by re-apparitions of conscience.

From time to time the chief of the band, abrupt and alert, and making sudden turns about the vessel, came to him and whispered in his ear. The old man answered by a nod. It might have been the lightning consulting the night.

CHAPTER III

TROUBLED MEN ON THE TROUBLED SEA

TWO men on board the craft were absorbed in thought—the old man, and the skipper of the hooker, who must not be mistaken for the chief of the band. The captain was occupied by the sea; the old man by the sky. The former did not lift his eyes from the waters; the latter kept watch on the firmament. The skipper's anxiety was the state of the sea; the old man seemed to suspect the heavens. He scanned the stars through every break in the clouds.

It was the time when day still lingers, but some few stars begin faintly to pierce the twilight. The horizon was singular. The mist upon it varied. Haze predominated on land, clouds at sea.

The skipper, noting the rising billows, hauled all taut before he got outside Portland Bay. He would not delay so doing, until he should pass the headland. He examined the rigging closely, and satisfied himself that the lower shrouds were well set up, and supported firmly the futtock-shrouds; precautions of a man who means to carry on with a press of sail, at all risks.

The hooker was not trimmed, being two foot by the head. This was her weak point.

The captain passed every minute from the binnacle to the standard compass, taking the bearings of objects on shore. The *Matutina* had at first a soldier's wind which was not unfavorable, though she could not lie within five points of her course. The captain took the helm as often as possiblé, trusting no one but himself to prevent her from dropping to leeward, the effect of the rudder being influenced by the steerage-way.

The difference between the true and apparent course, being relative

to the way on the vessel, the hooker seemed to lie closer to the wind than she did in reality. The breeze was not a-beam, nor was the hooker close-hauled; but one cannot ascertain the true course made, except when the wind is abaft. When you perceive long streaks of clouds meeting in a point on the horizon, you may be sure that the wind is in that quarter; but this evening the wind was variable; the needle fluctuated; the captain distrusted the erratic movements of the vessel. He steered carefully but resolutely, luffed her up, watched her coming to, prevented her from yawing, and from running into the wind's eye: noted the leeway, the little jerks of the helm: was observant of every roll and pitch of the vessel, of the difference in her speed, and of the variable gusts of wind. For fear of accidents, he was constantly on the look-out for squalls from off the land he was hugging, and above all he was cautious to keep her full; the direction of the breeze indicated by the compass being uncertain from the small size of the instrument. The captain's eyes, frequently lowered, remarked every change in the waves.

Once, nevertheless, he raised them towards the sky, and tried to make out the three stars of Orion's belt. These stars are called the three magi, and an old proverb of the ancient Spanish pilots declares that, "*He who sees the three magi is not far from the Saviour.*"

This glance of the captain's tallied with an aside growled out, at the other end ot the vessel, by the old man. "We don't even see the pointers, nor the star Antares, red as he is. Not one is distinct.

No care troubled the other fugitives.

Still, when the first hilarity they felt in their escape had passed away, they could not help remembering that they were at sea in the month of January, and that the wind was frozen. It was impossible to establish themselves in the cabin. It was much too narrow and too much encumbered by bales and baggage. The baggage belonged to the passengers, the bales to the crew, for the hooker was no pleasure boat, and was engaged in smuggling. The passengers were obliged to settle themselves on deck, a condition to which these wanderers easily resigned themselves. Open-air habits make it simple for vagabonds to arrange themselves for the night. The open air (*la belle étoile*) is their friend, and the cold helps them to sleep—sometimes to die.

This night, as we have seen, there was no *belle étoile*.

The Languedocian and the Genoese, while waiting for supper, rolled themselves up near the women, at the foot of the mast, in some tarpaulin which the sailors had thrown them.

The old man remained at the bow motionless, and apparently insensible to the cold.

The captain of the hooker, from the helm where he was standing,

uttered a sort of guttural call somewhat like the cry of the American bird called the Exclaimer; at his call the chief of the band drew near, and the captain addressed him thus:

"Etcheco Jaüna." These two words, which mean "tiller of the mountain," form with these old Cantabri a solemn preface to any subject which should command attention.

Then the captain pointed the old man out to the chief, and the dialogue continued in Spanish; it was not, indeed, a very correct dialect, being that of the mountains. Here are the questions and answers:

"Etcheco jaüna, que es este hombre?"

"Un hombre."

"Que lenguas habla?"

"Todas."

"Que cosas sabe?"

"Todas."

"Qual païs?"

"Ningun, y todos."

"Qual dios?"

"Dios."

"Como le llamas?"

"El tonto."

"Como dices que le llamas?"

"El sabio."

"En vuestre tropa que esta?"

"Esta lo que esta."

"El gefe?"

"No."

"Pues que esta?"

"La alma." *

The chief and the captain parted, each reverting to his own meditation, and a little while afterwards the *Matutina* left the gulf.

Now came the great rolling of the open sea. The ocean in the spaces between the foam was slimy in appearance. The waves seen

* Tiller of the mountain, who is that man?—A man.
What tongue does he speak?—All.
What things does he know?—All.
What is his country?—None and all.
Who is his God?—God.
What do you call him?—The madman.
What do you say you call him?—The wise man.
In your band, what is he?—He is what he is.
The chief?—No.
Then what is he?—The soul.

through the twilight in indistinct outline, somewhat resembled plashes of gall. Here and there a wave floating flat showed cracks and stars, like a pane of glass broken by stones; in the centre of these stars, in a revolving orifice, trembled a phosphorescence, like that feline reflection of vanished light which shines in the eyeballs of owls.

Proudly, like a bold swimmer, the *Matutina* crossed the dangerous Shambles shoal. This bank, a hidden obstruction at the entrance of Portland roads, is not a barrier, it is an amphitheatre—a circus of sand under the sea, its benches cut out by the circling of the waves—an arena, round and symmetrical, as high as a Jungfrau—only drowned—a coloseum of the ocean, seen by the diver in the vision-like transparency which engulfs him, such is the Shambles shoal. There hydras fight, leviathans meet. There, says the legend, at the bottom of the gigantic shaft, are the wrecks of ships, seized and sunk by the huge spider Kraken, also called the fish-mountain. Such things lie in the fearful shadow of the sea.

These spectral realities, unknown to man, are manifested at the surface by a slight shiver.

In this nineteenth century, the Shambles bank is in ruins; the breakwater recently constructed has overthrown and mutilated, by the force of its surf, that high submarine architecture, just as the jetty, built at the Croisic in 1760, changed, by a quarter of an hour, the courses of the tides. And yet the tide is eternal. But eternity obeys man more than man imagines.

CHAPTER IV

A CLOUD DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS ENTERS ON THE SCENE

THE old man whom the chief of the band had named first the Madman, then the Sage, now never left the forecastle. Since they crossed the Shambles shoal, his attention had been divided between the heavens and the waters. He looked down, he looked upwards, and above all watched the North-east.

The skipper gave the helm to a sailor, stepped over the after hatchway, crossed the gangway, and went on to the forecastle. He approached the old man, but not in front. He stood a little behind, with elbows resting on his hips, with outstretched hands, the head on one side, with open eyes and arched eyebrows, and a smile in the corners of his mouth, an attitude of curiosity hesitating between mockery and respect.

The old man, either that it was his habit to talk to himself, or that hearing some one behind incited him to speech, began to soliloquize while he looked into space.

"The Meridian from which the right ascension is calculated, is marked in this century by four stars, the Polar, Cassiopeia's Chair, Andromeda's Head, and the star Algenib, which is in Pegasus. But there is not one visible."

These words followed each other mechanically, confused, and scarcely articulated, as if he did not care to pronounce them. They floated out of his mouth and dispersed. Soliloquy is the smoke exhaled by the inmost fires of the soul.

The skipper broke in, "Señor!"

The old man, perhaps rather deaf as well as very thoughtful, went on:

"Too few stars, and too much wind. The breeze continually changes its direction and blows inshore; thence it rises perpendicularly. This results from the land being warmer than the water. Its atmos-

phere is lighter. The cold and dense wind of the sea rushes in to replace it. From this cause, in the upper regions the wind blows towards the land from every quarter. It would be advisable to make long tacks between the true and apparent parallel. When the latitude by observation differs from the latitude by dead reckoning, by not more than three minutes in thirty miles, or by four minutes in sixty miles, you are in the true course.

The skipper bowed, but the old man saw him not. The latter, who wore what resembled an Oxford or Gottingen university gown, did not relax his haughty and rigid attitude. He observed the waters as a critic of waves and of men. He studied the billows, but almost as if he was about to demand his turn to speak amidst their turmoil, and teach them something. There was in him both pedagogue and soothsayer. He seemed an oracle of the deep.

He continued his soliloquy, which was perhaps intended to be heard.

"We might strive if we had a wheel instead of a helm. With a speed of twelve miles an hour, a force of twenty pounds exerted on the wheel produces three hundred thousand pounds' effect on the course. And more, too. For in some cases, with a double block and runner, they can get two more revolutions."

The skipper bowed a second time, and said, "Señor!"

The old man's eye rested on him; he had turned his head without moving his body.

"Call me Doctor."

"Master Doctor, I am the skipper."

"Just so," said the doctor.

The doctor, as henceforward we shall call him, appeared willing to converse.

"Skipper, have you an English sextant?"

"No."

"Without an English sextant you cannot take an altitude at all."

"The Basques," replied the captain, "took altitudes before there were any English."

"Be careful you are not taken aback."

"I keep her away when necessary."

"Have you tried how many knots she is running?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Just now."

"How?"

"By the log."

"Did you take the trouble to look at the triangle?"

"Yes."

"Did the sand run through the glass in exactly thirty seconds?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure that the sand has not worn the hole between the globes?"

"Yes."

"Have you proved the sand-glass by the oscillations of a bullet?"

"Suspended by a rope-yarn drawn out from the top of a coil of soaked hemp? Undoubtedly."

"Have you waxed the yarn lest it should stretch?"

"Yes."

"Have you tested the log?"

"I tested the sand-glass by the bullet, and checked the log by a round shot."

"Of what size was the shot?"

"One foot in diameter."

"Heavy enough!"

"It is an old round shot of our war hooker, *La Casse de Par-Grand.*"

"Which was in the Armada?"

"Yes."

"And which carried six hundred soldiers, fifty sailors, and twenty-five guns?"

"Shipwreck knows it."

"How did you compute the resistance of the water to the shot?"

"By means of a German scale."

"Have you taken into account the resistance of the rope supporting the shot to the waves?"

"Yes."

"What was the result?"

"The resistance of the water was one hundred and seventy pounds."

"That's to say, she is running four French leagues an hour."

"And three Dutch leagues."

"But that is the difference merely of the vessel's way and the rate at which the sea is running?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Whither are you steering?"

"For a creek I know, between Loyola and St. Sebastian."

"Make the latitude of the harbor's mouth as soon as possible."

"Yes, as near as I can."

"Beware of gusts and currents. The first cause the second."

"Traidores."*

"No abuse. The sea understands. Insult nothing. Rest satisfied with watching."

"I have watched, and I do watch. Just now the tide is running against the wind; by and by, when it turns, we shall be all right."

"Have you a chart?"

"No; not for this channel."

"Then you sail by rule of thumb?"

"Not at all. I have a compass."

"The compass is one eye, the chart the other."

"A man with one eye can see."

"How do you compute the difference between the true and apparent course?"

"I've got my standard compass, and I make a guess."

"To guess is all very well. To know for certain is better."

"Christopher† guessed."

"When there is a fog and the needle revolves treacherously, you can never tell on which side you should look out for squalls, and the end of it is that you know neither the true nor apparent day's work. An ass with his chart is better off than a wizard with his oracle."

"There is no fog in the breeze yet, and I see no cause for alarm."

"Ships are like flies in the spider's web of the sea."

"Just now both winds and waves are tolerably favorable."

"Black specks quivering on the billows, such are men on the ocean."

"I dare say there will be nothing wrong to-night."

"You may get into such a mess that you will find it hard to get out of it."

"All goes well at present."

The doctor's eyes were fixed on the north-east. The skipper continued:

"Let us once reach the Gulf of Gascony, and I answer for our safety. Ah! I should say I am at home there. I know it well, my Gulf of Gascony. It is a little basin, often very boisterous; but there, I know every sounding in it and the nature of the bottom; mud opposite San Cipriano, shells opposite Cizarque, sand off Cape Peñas, little pebbles off Boncaut de Mimizan, and I know the color of every pebble."

The skipper broke off, the doctor was no longer listening.

The doctor gazed at the north-east. Over that icy face passed an

---

* Traitors. † Columbus.

extraordinary expression. All the agony of terror possible to a mask of stone was depicted there. From his mouth escaped this word:

"Good!"

His eyeballs, which had all at once become quite round like an owl's, were dilated with stupor on discovering a speck on the horizon. He added:

"It is well. As for me, I do not object."

The skipper looked at him. The doctor went on talking to himself, or to some one in the deep:

"I say, Yes."

Then he was silent, opened his eyes wider and wider with renewed attention on that which he was watching, and said:

"It is coming from afar, but not the less surely will it come."

The arc of the horizon which occupied the visual rays and thoughts of the doctor, being opposite to the west, was illuminated by the transcendent reflection of twilight, as if it were day. This arc, limited in extent, and surrounded by streaks of grayish vapor, was uniformly blue, but of a leaden rather than cerulean blue. The doctor, having completely returned to the contemplation of the sea, pointed to this atmospheric arc, and said:

"Skipper, do you see?"

"What?"

"That."

"What?"

"Out there."

"A blue spot? Yes."

"What is it?"

"A niche in heaven."

"For those who go to heaven; for those who go elsewhere—it is another affair." And he emphasized these enigmatical words with an appalling expression which was unseen in the darkness.

A silence ensued. The skipper, remembering the two names given by the chief to this man, asked himself the question:

"Is he a madman, or is he a sage?"

The stiff and bony finger of the doctor remained immovably pointing, like a sign-post, to the misty blue spot in the sky.

The skipper looked at this spot.

"In truth," he growled out, "it is not sky, but clouds."

"A blue cloud is worse than a black cloud," said the doctor; "and," he added, "it's a snow-cloud."

"*La nube de la nieve*," said the skipper, as if trying to understand the word better by translating it.

"Do you know what a snow-cloud is?" asked the doctor.

"No."

"You'll know by and by."

The skipper again turned his attention to the horizon.

Continuing to observe the cloud, he muttered between his teeth:

"One month of squalls, another of wet; January with its gales, February with its rains, that's all the winter we Asturians get. Our rain even is warm. We've no snow but on the mountains. Ay, ay, look out for the avalanche. The avalanche is no respecter of persons. The avalanche is a brute."

"And the water-spout is a monster," said the doctor, adding, after a pause, "Here it comes." He continued, "Several winds are getting up together. A strong wind from the west, and a gentle wind from the east."

"That last is a deceitful one," said the skipper.

The blue cloud was growing larger.

"If the snow," said the doctor, "is appalling when it slips down the mountain, think what it is when it falls from the Pole!"

His eye was glassy. The cloud seemed to spread over his face and simultaneously over the horizon. He continued, in musing tones:

"Every minute the fatal hour draws nearer. The will of heaven is about to be manifested."

The skipper asked himself again this question, "Is he a madman?"

"Skipper," began the doctor, without taking his eyes off the cloud, "have you often crossed the Channel?"

"This is the first time."

The doctor, who was absorbed by the blue cloud, and who, as a sponge can take up but a definite quantity of water, had but a definite measure of anxiety, displayed no more emotion at this answer of the skipper than was expressed by a slight shrug of his shoulders.

"How is that?"

"Master Doctor, my usual cruise is to Ireland. I sail from Fontarabia to Black Harbor, or to the Achill Islands. I go sometimes to Braich-y-Pwll, a point on the Welsh coast. But I always steer outside the Scilly Islands. I do not know this sea at all."

"That's serious. Woe to him who is inexperienced on the ocean! One ought to be familiar with the Channel: the Channel is the Sphinx. Look out for shoals."

"We are in twenty-five fathoms here."

"We ought to get into fifty-five fathoms to the west, and avoid even twenty fathoms to the east."

"We'll sound as we get on."

"The Channel is not an ordinary sea. The water rises fifty feet with the spring tides, and twenty-five with neap tides. Here we are in slack water. I thought you looked scared."

"We'll sound to-night."



"To sound you must heave-to, and that you cannot do."

"Why not?"

"On account of the wind."

"We'll try."

"The squall is close on us."

"We'll sound, Master Doctor."

"You could not even bring-to."

"Trust in God."

"Take care what you say. Pronounce not lightly the awful name."

"I will sound, I tell you."

"Be sensible; you will have a gale of wind presently."

"I say that I will try for soundings."

"The resistance of the water will prevent the lead from sinking, and the line will break. Ah! so this is your first time in these waters?"

"The first time."

"Very well; in that case listen, skipper."

The tone of the word Listen was so commanding, that the skipper made an obeisance.

"Master Doctor, I am all attention."

"Port your helm, and haul up on the starboard tack."

"What do you mean?"

"Steer your course to the west."

"Caramba!"

"Steer your course to the west."

"Impossible."

"As you will. What I tell you is for the others' sake. As for myself, I am indifferent."

"But, Master Doctor, steer west?"

"Yes, skipper."

"The wind will be dead ahead."

"Yes, skipper."

"She'll pitch like the devil."

"Moderate your language. Yes, skipper."

"The vessel would be in irons."

"Yes, skipper."

"That means very likely the mast will go."

"Possibly."

"Do you wish me to steer west?"

"Yes."

"I cannot."

"In that case settle your reckoning with the sea."

"The wind ought to change."

"It will not change all night."

"Why not?"

"Because it is a wind twelve hundred leagues in length."

"Make headway against such a wind. Impossible."

"To the west, I tell you."

"I'll try, but in spite of everything she will fall off."

"That's the danger."

"The wind sets us to the east."

"Don't go to the east."

"Why not?"

"Skipper, do you know what is for us the word of death?"

"No."

"Death is the east."

"I'll steer west."

This time the doctor, having turned right round, looked the skipper full in the face, and with his eyes resting on him, as though to implant the idea in his head, pronounced slowly, syllable by syllable, these words:

"If to-night out at sea, we hear the sound of a bell, the ship is lost."

The skipper pondered in amaze.

"What do you mean?"

The doctor did not answer. His countenance, expressive for a moment, was now reserved. His eyes became vacuous. He did not appear to hear the skipper's wondering question. He was now attending to his own monologue. His lips let fall, as if mechanically, in a low murmuring tone, these words:

"The time has come for sullied souls to purify themselves."

The skipper made that expressive grimace, which raises the chin towards the nose.

"He is more madman than sage," he growled, and moved off.

Nevertheless he steered west.

But the wind and the sea were rising.

CHAPTER V

HARDQUANONNE

THE mist was deformed by all sorts of inequalities, bulging out at once on every point of the horizon, as if invisible mouths were busy puffing out the bags of wind. The formation of the clouds was becoming ominous. In the west, as in the east, the sky's depths were now invaded by the blue cloud: it advanced in the teeth of the wind. These contradictions are part of the wind's vagaries.

The sea, which a moment before wore scales, now wore a skin—such is the nature of that dragon. It was no longer a crocodile, it was a boa. The skin, lead-colored and dirty, looked thick, and was crossed by heavy wrinkles. Here and there, on its surface, bubbles of surge, like pustules, gathered and then burst. The foam was like a leprosy. It was at this moment that the hooker, still seen from afar by the child, lighted her signal.

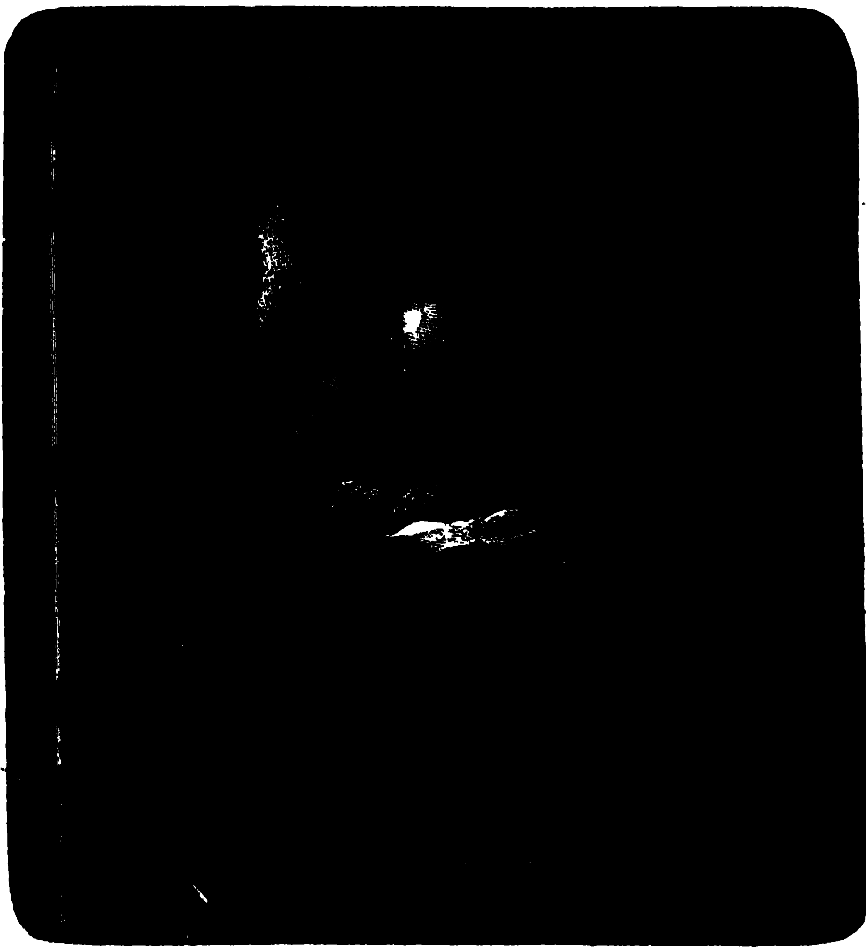
A quarter of an hour elapsed.

The skipper looked for the doctor; he was no longer on deck. Directly the skipper had left him, the doctor had stooped his somewhat ungainly form under the hood, and had entered the cabin; there he had sat down near the stove, on a block. He had taken a shagreen ink-bottle and a cordwain pocket-book from his pocket; he had extracted from his pocket-book a parchment folded four times, old, stained, and yellow; he had opened the sheet, taken a pen out of his ink-case, placed the pocket-book flat on his knee, and the parchment on the pocket-book; and by the rays of the lantern, which was lighting the cook, he set to writing on the back of the parchment. The roll of the waves inconvenienced him. He wrote thus for some time.

As he wrote, the doctor remarked the gourd of aguardiente, which

the Provençal tasted every time he added a grain of pimento to the puchero, as if he were consulting it in reference to the seasoning.

The doctor noticed the gourd, not because it was a bottle of brandy, but because of a name which was plaited in the wicker-work with red



rushes on a background of white. There was light enough in the cabin to permit of his reading the name.

The doctor paused and spelled it in a low voice:

"Hardquanonne."

Then he addressed the cook.

"I had not observed that gourd before; did it belong to Hardquanonne?"

"Yes," the cook answered; "to our poor comrade, Hardquanonne."

The doctor went on:

"To Hardquanonne, the Fleming of Flanders?"

"Yes."

"Who is in prison?"

"Yes."

"In the dungeon at Chatham?"

"It is his gourd," replied the cook; "and he was my friend. I keep it in remembrance of him. When shall we see him again? It is the bottle he used to wear slung over his hip."

The doctor took up his pen again, and continued laboriously tracing somewhat straggling lines on the parchment. He was evidently anxious that his hand-writing should be very legible; and, at length, notwithstanding the tremulousness of the vessel and the tremulousness of age, he finished what he wanted to write.

It was time, for, suddenly, a sea struck the craft, a mighty rush of waters besieged the hooker, and they felt her break into that fearful dance in which ships lead off with the tempest.

The doctor arose and approached the stove, meeting the ship's motion with his knees dexterously bent, dried as best he could, at the stove where the pot was boiling, the lines he had written, refolded the parchment in the pocket-book, and replaced the pocket-book and the ink-horn in his pocket.

The stove was not the least ingenious piece of interior economy in the hooker. It was judiciously isolated. Meanwhile, the pot heaved—the Provençal was watching it.

"Fish broth," said he.

"For the fishes," replied the doctor. Then he went on deck again.

CHAPTER VI

THEY THINK THAT HELP IS AT HAND

THROUGH his growing pre-occupation, the doctor in some sort reviewed the situation; and any one near to him might have heard these words drop from his lips:

"Too much rolling, and not enough pitching."

Then recalled to himself by the dark workings of his mind, he sank again into thought, as a miner into his shaft. His meditation in nowise interfered with his watch on the sea. The contemplation of the sea is in itself a reverie.

The dark punishment of the waters, eternally tortured, was commencing. A lamentation arose from the whole main. Preparations, confused and melancholy, were forming in space. The doctor observed all before him, and lost no detail. There was, however, no sign of scrutiny in his face. One does not scrutinize hell.

A vast commotion, yet half latent, but visible through the turmoils in space, increased and irritated, more and more, the winds, the vapors, the waves. Nothing is so logical and nothing appears so absurd as the ocean. Self-dispersion is the essence of its sovereignty, and is one of the elements of its redundance. The sea is ever for and against. It knots, that it may unravel, itself; one of its slopes attacks, the other relieves. No apparition is so wonderful as the waves. Who can paint the alternating hollows and promontories, the valleys, the melting bosoms, the sketches? How render the thickets of foam, blendings of mountains and dreams? The indescribable is everywhere there, in the rending, in the frowning, in the anxiety, in the perpetual contradiction, in the chiaroscuro, in the pendants of the cloud, in the keys of the ever-open vault, in the disaggregation without rupture, in the funereal tumult caused by all that madness!

The wind had just set due north. Its violence was so favorable and so useful in driving them away from England that the captain of the *Matutina* had made up his mind to set all sail. The hooker slipped through the foam as at a gallop, the wind right aft, bounding from wave to wave in a gay frenzy. The fugitives were delighted, and laughed; they clapped their hands, applauded the surf, the sea, the wind, the sails, the swift progress, the flight, all unmindful of the future. The doctor appeared not to see them, and dreamed on.

Every vestige of day had faded away. This was the moment when the child, watching from the distant cliff, lost sight of the hooker. Up to then, his glance had remained fixed, and, as it were, leaning on the vessel. What part had that look in fate? When the hooker was lost to sight in the distance, and when the child could no longer see aught, the child went north and the ship went south.

All were plunged in darkness.

CHAPTER VII

SUPERHUMAN HORRORS

ON their part it was with wild jubilee and delight that those on board the hooker saw the hostile land recede and lessen behind them. By degrees the dark ring of ocean rose higher, dwarfing in twilight Portland, Purbeck, Tineham, Kimmeridge, the Matravers, the long streaks of dim cliffs, and the coast dotted with light-houses.

England disappeared. The fugitives had now nothing round them but the sea.

All at once night grew awful.

There was no longer extent nor space; the sky became blackness, and closed in round the vessel. The snow began to fall slowly; a few flakes appeared. They might have been ghosts. Nothing else was visible in the course of the wind. They felt as if yielded up. A snare lurked in every possibility.

It is in this cavernous darkness that in our climate the Polar waterspout makes its appearance.

A great muddy cloud, like to the belly of a hydra, hung over ocean, and in places its lividity adhered to the waves. Some of these adherences resembled pouches with holes, pumping the sea, disgorging vapor, and refilling themselves with water. Here and there these suctions drew up cones of foam on the sea.

The boreal storm hurled itself on the hooker. The hooker rushed to meet it. The squall and the vessel met as though to insult each other.

In the first mad shock not a sail was clewed up, not a jib lowered, not a reef taken in, so much is flight a delirium. The mast creaked and bent back as if in fear.

Cyclones, in our northern hemisphere, circle from left to right, in the same direction as the hands of a watch, with a velocity which is sometimes as much as sixty miles an hour. Although she was entirely at the mercy of that whirling power, the hooker behaved as if she were out in moderate weather, without any further precaution than keeping her head on to the rollers, with the wind broad on the bow so as to avoid being pooped or caught broadside on. This semi-prudence would have availed her nothing in case of the wind's shifting and taking her aback.

A deep rumbling was brewing up in the distance. The roar of the abyss, nothing can be compared to it. It is the great brutish howl of the universe. What we call matter, that unsearchable organism, that amalgamation of incommensurable energies, in which can occasionally be detected an almost imperceptible degree of intention which makes us shudder, that blind, benighted cosmos, that enigmatical Pan, has a cry, a strange cry, prolonged, obstinate, and continuous, which is less than speech and more than thunder. That cry is the hurricane. Other voices, songs, melodies, clamors, tones, proceed from nests, from broods, from pairings, from nuptials, from homes. This one, a trumpet, comes out of the Naught, which is All. Other voices express the soul of the universe, this one expresses the monster. It is the howl of the formless. It is the inarticulate, finding utterance in the indefinite. A thing it is full of pathos and terror. Those clamors converse above and beyond man. They rise, fall, undulate, determine waves of sound, form all sorts of wild surprises for the mind, now burst close to the ear with the importunity of a peal of trumpets, now assail us with the rumbling hoarseness of distance. Giddy uproar which resembles a language, and which, in fact, is a language. It is the effort which the world makes to speak. It is the lisping of the wonderful. In this wail is manifested vaguely all that the vast dark palpitation endures, suffers, accepts, rejects. For the most part it talks nonsense; it is like an access of chronic sickness, and rather an epilepsy diffused than a force employed; we fancy that we are witnessing the descent of supreme evil into the infinite. At moments we seem to discern a reclamation of the elements, some vain effort of chaos to re-assert itself over creation. At times it is a complaint. The void bewails and justifies itself. It is as the pleading of the world's cause. We can fancy that the universe is engaged in a law-suit; we listen, we try to grasp the reasons given, the redoubtable for and against. Such a moaning of the shadows has the tenacity of a syllogism. Here is a vast trouble for thought. Here is the *raison d'être* of mythologies and polytheisms. To the terror of those great murmurs are added superhuman outlines melting away as they appear,—Eumen-

ides which are almost distinct, throats of furies shaped in the clouds, Plutonian chimeras almost defined. No horrors equal those sobs, those laughs, those tricks of tumult, those inscrutable questions and answers, those appeals to unknown aid. Man knows not what to become in the presence of that awful incantation. He bows under the enigma of those Draconian intonations. What latent meaning have they? What do they signify? What do they threaten? What do they implore? It would seem as though all bonds were loosened. Vociferations from precipice to precipice, from air to water, from the wind to the wave, from the rain to the rock, from the zenith to the nadir, from the stars to the foam,—the abyss unmuzzled—such is that tumult, complicated by some mysterious strife with evil consciences.

The loquacity of night is not less lugubrious than its silence. One feels in it the anger of the unknown.

Night is a presence. Presence of what?

For that matter we must distinguish between night and the shadows. In the night there is the absolute; in the darkness the multiple. Grammar, logic as it is, admits of no singular for the shadows. The night is one, the shadows are many.

This mist of nocturnal mystery is the scattered, the fugitive, the crumbling, the fatal; one feels earth no longer, one feels the other reality.

In the shadow, infinite and indefinite, lives something or some one; but that which lives there forms part of our death. After our earthly passage, when that shadow shall be light for us, the life which is beyond our life shall seize us. Meanwhile it appears to touch and try us. Obscurity is a pressure. Night is, as it were, a hand placed on our soul. At certain hideous and solemn hours we feel that which is beyond the wall of the tomb encroaching on us.

Never does this proximity of the unknown seem more imminent than in storms at sea. The horrible combines with the fantastic. The possible interrupter of human actions, the old Cloud compeller, has it in his power to mould, in whatsoever shape he chooses, the inconsistent element, the limitless incoherence, the force diffused and undecided of aim. That mystery the tempest, every instant accepts and executes some unknown changes of will, apparent or real.

Poets have, in all ages, called this the caprice of the waves. But there is no such thing as caprice. The disconcerting enigmas which in nature we call caprice, and in human life chance, are splinters of a law revealed to us in glimpses.

CHAPTER VIII

NIX ET NOX

THE characteristic of the snow-storm is its blackness. Nature's habitual aspect during a storm, the earth or sea black and the sky pale, is reversed; the sky is black, the ocean white, foam below, darkness above; an horizon walled in with smoke; a zenith roofed with crape. The tempest resembles a cathedral hung with mourning, but no light in that cathedral: no phantom lights on the crests of the waves, no spark, no phosphorescence, naught but a huge shadow. The Polar cyclone differs from the Tropical cyclone, inasmuch as the one sets fire to every light, and the other extinguishes them all. The world is suddenly converted into the arched vault of a cave. Out of the night falls a dust of pale spots, which hesitate between sky and sea. These spots, which are flakes of snow, slip, wander, and float. It is like the tears of a winding-sheet putting themselves into life-like motion. A mad wind mingles with this dissemination. Blackness crumbling into whiteness, the furious into the obscure, all the tumult of which the sepulchre is capable, a whirlwind under a catafalque—such is the snow-storm.

Underneath trembles the ocean, forming and reforming over portentous unknown depths.

In the Polar wind, which is electrical, the flakes turn suddenly into hailstones, and the air becomes filled with projectiles; the water crackles, shot with grape.

No thunder-strokes: the lightning of boreal storms is silent. What is sometimes said of the cat, "it swears," may be applied to this lightning. It is a menace proceeding from a mouth half open, and strangely inexorable. The snow-storm is a storm blind and dumb; when it has passed, the ships also are often blind and the sailors dumb.

To escape from such an abyss is difficult.

It would be wrong, however, to believe shipwreck to be absolutely inevitable. The Danish fishermen of Disco and the Balesin; the seekers of black whales; Hearn, steering towards Behring Strait, to discover the mouth of Coppermine River; Hudson, Mackenzie, Vancouver, Ross, Dumont d'Urville, all underwent at the Pole itself the wildest hurricanes, and escaped out of them.

It was into this description of tempest that the hooker had entered, triumphant and in full sail. Frenzy against frenzy. When Montgomery, escaping from Rouen, threw his galley, with all the force of its oars, against the chain barring the Seine at La Bouille, he showed similar effrontery.

The *Matutina* sailed on fast; she bent so much under her sails, that at moments she made a fearful angle with the sea of fifteen degrees; but her good bellied keel adhered to the water as if glued to it. The keel resisted the grasp of the hurricane. The lantern at the prow cast its light ahead.

The cloud, full of winds, dragging its tumor over the deep, cramped and eat more and more into the sea round the hooker. Not a gull, not a sea-mew, nothing but snow. The expanse of the field of waves was becoming contracted and terrible; only three or four gigantic ones were visible.

Now and then a tremendous flash of lightning of a red copper color broke out behind the obscure super-position of the horizon and the zenith; that sudden release of vermilion flame revealed the horror of the clouds; that abrupt conflagration of the depths, to which for an instant the first tiers of clouds and the distant boundaries of the celestial chaos seemed to adhere, placed the abyss in perspective. On this ground of fire the snow-flakes showed black; they might have been compared to dark butterflies flying about in a furnace—then all was extinguished.

The first explosion over, the squall, still pursuing the hooker, began to roar in thorough bass. This phase of grumbling is a perilous diminution of uproar. Nothing is so terrifying as this monologue of the storm. This gloomy recitative appears to serve as a moment of rest to the mysterious combating forces, and indicates a species of patrol kept in the unknown.

The hooker held wildly on her course. Her two mainsails especially were doing fearful work. The sky and sea were as of ink with jets of foam running higher than the mast. Every instant masses of water swept the deck like a deluge, and at each roll of the vessel, the hawse-holes, now to starboard, now to larboard, became as so many open mouths vomiting back the foam into the sea. The women had

taken refuge in the cabin, but the men remained on deck; the blinding snow eddied round, the spitting surge mingled with it. All was fury.

At that moment the chief of the band, standing abaft on the stern-frames, holding on with one hand to the shrouds, and with the other taking off the kerchief he wore round his head and waving it in the light of the lantern, gay and arrogant, with pride in his face, and his hair in wild disorder, intoxicated by all the darkness, cried out:

"We are free!"

"Free, free, free," echoed the fugitives, and the band, seizing hold of the rigging, rose up on deck.

"Hurrah!" shouted the chief.

And the band shouted in the storm:

"Hurrah!"

Just as this clamor was dying away in the tempest a loud solemn voice rose from the other end of the vessel, saying:

"Silence!"

All turned their heads.

The darkness was thick, and the doctor was leaning against the mast so that he seemed part of it, and they could not see him.

The voice spoke again:

"Listen!"

All were silent.

Then did they distinctly hear through the darkness the toll of a bell.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHARGE CONFIDED TO A RAGING SEA

HE skipper, at the helm, burst out laughing:

"A bell, that's good. We are on the larboard tack. What does the bell prove? Why, that we have land to starboard."

The firm and measured voice of the doctor replied:

"You have not land to starboard."

"But we have," shouted the skipper.

"No!"

"But that bell tolls from the land."

"That bell," said the doctor, "tolls from the sea."

A shudder passed over these daring men, the haggard faces of the two women appeared above the companion like two hobgoblins conjured up; the doctor took a step forward, separating his tall form from the mast. From the depth of the night's darkness came the toll of the bell.

The doctor resumed:

"There is in the midst of the sea, half-way between Portland and the Channel Islands, a buoy, placed there as a caution; that buoy is moored by chains to the shoal, and floats on the top of the water. On the buoy is fixed an iron trestle, and across the trestle a bell is hung. In bad weather heavy seas toss the buoy, and the bell rings. That is the bell you hear."

The doctor paused to allow an extra violent gust of wind to pass over, waited until the sound of the bell re-asserted itself, and then went on:

"To hear that bell in a storm, when the nor'-wester is blowing, is to be lost. Wherefore? For this reason: if you hear the bell, it is because the wind brings it to you. But the wind is nor'-westerly, and the

breakers of Alderney lie east. You hear the bell only because you are between the buoy and the breakers. It is on those breakers the wind is driving you. You are on the wrong side of the buoy. If you were on the right side, you would be out at sea on a safe course, and you would



not hear the bell. The wind would not convey the sound to you. You would pass close to the buoy without knowing it. We are out of our course. That bell is shipwreck sounding the tocsin. Now, look out!"

As the doctor spoke the bell, soothed by a lull of the storm, rang slowly stroke by stroke; and its intermitting toll seemed to testify to the truth of the old man's words. It was as the knell of the abyss.

All listened breathless. Now to the voice. Now to the bell.

CHAPTER X

THE COLOSSAL SAVAGE, THE STORM

IN the meantime the skipper had caught up his speaking-trumpet.

"*Cargate todo, hombres;* let go the sheets, man the down-hauls, lower ties and brails. Let us steer to the west, let us regain the high sea; head for the buoy, steer for the bell, there's an offing down there. We've yet a chance."

"Try," said the doctor.

Let us remark here, by the way, that this ringing buoy, a kind of bell-tower on the deep, was removed in 1802. There are yet alive very old mariners who remember hearing it. It forewarned, but rather too late.

The orders of the skipper were obeyed. The Languedocian made a third sailor. All bore a hand. Not satisfied with brailing up, they furled the sails; lashed the earrings, secured the clew-lines, bunt-lines, and leech-lines; and clapped preventor-shrouds on the block-straps, which thus might serve as back-stays. They fished the mast. They battened down the ports and bulls' eyes, which is a method of walling up a ship. These evolutions, though executed in a lubberly fashion, were, nevertheless, thoroughly effective. The hooker was stripped to bare poles. But, in proportion as the vessel, stowing every stitch of canvas, became more helpless, the havoc of both winds and waves increased. The seas ran mountains high.

The hurricane, like an executioner hastening to his victim, began to dismember the craft. There came, in the twinkling of an eye, a dreadful crash: the top-sails were blown from the bolt-ropes, the chess-trees were hewn asunder, the deck was swept clear, the shrouds were carried away, the mast went by the board, all the lumber of the wreck

was flying in shivers. The main shrouds gave out although they were turned in, and stoppered to four fathoms.

The magnetic currents common to snow-storms hastened the destruction of the rigging. It broke as much from the effect of effluvium as the violence of the wind. Most of the chain gear, fouled in the blocks, ceased to work. Forward the bows, aft the quarters, quivered under the terrific shocks. One wave washed overboard the compass and its binnacle. A second carried away the boat, which, like a box slung under a carriage, had been, in accordance with the quaint Asturian custom, lashed to the bowsprit. A third breaker wrenched off the spiritsail yard. A fourth swept away the figure-head and signal light.

The rudder only was left.

To replace the ship's bow lantern they set fire to, and suspended at the stem, a large block of wood covered with oakum and tar.

The mast, broken in two, all bristling with quivering splinters, ropes, blocks, and yards cumbered the deck. In falling it had stove in a plank of the starboard gunwale. The skipper, still firm at the helm, shouted:

"While we can steer, we have yet a chance. The lower planks hold good. Axes, axes! Overboard with the mast! Clear the decks!"

Both crew and passengers worked with the excitement of despair. A few strokes of the hatchets, and it was done. They pushed the mast over the side. The deck was cleared.

"Now," continued the skipper, "take a rope's end and lash me to the helm." To the tiller they bound him.

While they were fastening him he laughed, and shouted:

"Blow, old hurdy-gurdy, bellow. I've seen your equal off Cape Machichaco."

And when secured, he clutched the helm with that strange hilarity which danger awakens.

"All goes well, my lads. Long live our Lady of Buglose; let us steer west."

An enormous wave came down abeam, and fell on the vessel's quarter. There is always in storms a tiger-like wave, a billow fierce and decisive, which, attaining a certain height, creeps horizontally over the surface of the waters for a time, then rises, roars, rages, and falling on the distressed vessel, tears it limb from limb.

A cloud of foam covered the entire poop of the *Matutina*.

There was heard above the confusion of darkness and waters, a crash.

When the spray cleared off, when the stern again rose in view, the skipper and the helm had disappeared. Both had been swept away.

The helm and the man they had but just secured to it, had passed with the wave into the hissing turmoil of the hurricane.

The chief of the band, gazing intently into the darkness, shouted:

"*Te burlas de nosotros?*"

To this defiant exclamation there followed another cry:



"Let go the anchor. Save the skipper."

They rushed to the capstan and let go the anchor.

Hookers carry but one. In this case the anchor reached the bottom but only to be lost. The bottom was of the hardest rock. The billows were raging with resistless force. The cable snapped like a thread.

The anchor lay at the bottom of the sea. At the cutwater there remained but the cable end protruding from the hawse-hole.

From this moment the hooker became a wreck. The *Matutina* was irrevocably disabled. The vessel, just before in full sail, and almost formidable in her speed, was now helpless. All her evolutions were uncertain and executed at random. She yielded passively and like a log to the capricious fury of the waves. That in a few minutes there should be in place of an eagle a useless cripple, such a transformation is to be witnessed only at sea.



The howling of the wind became more and more frightful. A hurricane has terrible lungs; it makes unceasingly mournful additions to darkness which cannot be intensified. The bell on the sea rang dispairingly, as if tolled by a weird hand.

The *Matutina* drifted like a cork at the mercy of the waves. She sailed no longer—she merely floated. Every moment she seemed about to turn over on her back, like a dead fish. The good condition and perfectly water-tight state of the hull, alone saved her from this disaster. Below the water-line not a plank had started. There was not a cranny, chink, nor crack; and she had not made a single drop of water in the hold. This was lucky, as the pump, being out of order, was useless.

The hooker pitched and rolled frightfully in the seething billows.

The vessel had throes as of sickness, and seemed to be trying to belch forth the unhappy crew.

Helpless they clung to the standing rigging, to the transoms, to the shank painters, to the gaskets, to the broken planks, the protruding nails of which tore their hands, to the warped riders, and to all the rugged projections of the stumps of the masts. From time to time they listened. The toll of the bell came over the waters fainter and fainter; one would have thought that it also was in distress. Its ringing was no more than an intermittent rattle. Then this rattle died away. Where were they? At what distance from the buoy? The sound of the bell had frightened them—its silence terrified them. The north-wester drove them forward in, perhaps, a fatal course. They felt themselves wafted on by maddened and ever-recurring gusts of wind. The wreck sped forward in the darkness. There is nothing more fearful than being hurried forward blindfold. They felt the abyss before them, over them, under them. It was no longer a run, it was a rush.

Suddenly, through the appalling density of the snow-storm, there loomed a red light.

"A light-house!" cried the crew.

CHAPTER XI

THE CASKETS

T was, indeed, the Caskets light.

A light-house of the nineteenth century is a high cylinder of masonry, surmounted by scientifically constructed machinery for throwing light. The Casket light-house in particular is a triple white tower bearing three light-rooms. These three chambers revolve on clock-work wheels, with such precision that the man on watch who sees them from sea, can invariably take ten steps during their irradiation, and twenty-five during their eclipse. Everything is based on the focal plan, and on the rotation of the octagon drum, formed of eight wide simple lenses, in range, having above and below it two series of dioptric rings; an algebraic gear, secured from the effects of the beating of winds and waves by glass a millimetre thick, yet sometimes broken by the sea-eagles, which dash themselves like great moths against these gigantic lanterns. The building which encloses and sustains this mechanism, and in which it is set, is also mathematically constructed. Everything about it is plain, exact, bare, precise, correct. A light-house is a mathematical figure.

In the seventeenth century a light-house was a sort of plume of the land on the sea-shore. The architecture of a light-house tower was magnificent and extravagant. It was covered with balconies, balusters, lodges, alcoves, weather-cocks. Nothing but masks, statues, foliage, volutes, reliefs, figures large and small, medallions with inscriptions. *Pax in bello*, said the Eddystone light-house. We may as well observe, by the way, that this declaration of peace did not always disarm the ocean. Winstanley repeated it on a light-house which he constructed at his own expense, on a wild spot near Plymouth. The tower being finished, he shut himself up in it to have it tried by the tempest. The

storm came, and carried off the light-house, and Winstanley in it. Such excessive adornment gave too great a hold to the hurricane; as generals too brilliantly equipped in battle, draw the enemy's fire. Besides whimsical designs in stone, they were loaded with whimsical designs in iron, copper, and wood. The iron-work was in relief, the wood-work stood out. On the sides of the light-house there jutted out, clinging to the walls among the arabesques, engines of every description, useful and useless, windlasses, tackles, pulleys, counter-



poises, ladders, cranes, grapnels. On the pinnacle around the light, delicately wrought iron-work held great iron chandeliers, in which were placed pieces of rope steeped in resin; wicks which burned doggedly, and which no wind extinguished; and from top to bottom the tower was covered by a complication of sea standards, banderoles, banners, flags, pennons, colors which rose from stage to stage, from story to story, a medley of all hues, all shapes, all heraldic devices, all signals, all confusion, up to the light chamber, making, in the storm, a gay riot of tatters about the blaze. That insolent light on the brink of the abyss showed like a defiance, and inspired shipwrecked men with a spirit of daring. But the Casket light was not after this fashion.

It was, at that period, merely an old barbarous light-house, such as Henry I. had built it after the loss of the *White Ship*—a flaming pile of wood under an iron trellis, a brasier behind a railing, a head of hair flaming in the wind.

The only improvement made in this light-house since the twelfth century was a pair of forge-bellows worked by an indented pendulum and a stone weight, which had been added to the light chamber in 1610.

The fate of the sea-birds who chanced to fly against those old light-houses was more tragic than those of our days. The birds dashed against them, attracted by the light, and fell into the brasier, where they could be seen struggling like black spirits in a hell, and at times they would fall back again between the railings upon the rock, red hot, smoking, lame, blind, like half-burnt flies out of a lamp.

To a full-rigged ship in good trim, answering readily to the pilot's handling, the Caskets light is useful; it cries: Look out; it warns her of the shoal. To a disabled ship it is simply terrible. The hull, paralyzed and inert, without resistance, without defense against the impulse of the storm, or the mad heaving of the waves, a fish without fins, a bird without wings, can but go where the wind wills. The light-house shows the end—points out the spot where it is doomed to disappear—throws light upon the burial. It is the torch of the sepulchre.

To light up the inexorable chasm—to warn against the inevitable—what more tragic mockery!

CHAPTER XII

FACE TO FACE WITH THE ROCK

THE wretched people in distress on board the *Matutina* understood at once the mysterious derision which mocked their shipwreck. The appearance of the light-house raised their spirits at first, then overwhelmed them. Nothing could be done, nothing attempted. What has been said of kings, we may say of the waves—we are their people, we are their prey. All that they rave must be borne. The nor'-wester was driving the hooker on the Caskets. They were nearing them; no evasion was possible. They drifted rapidly towards the reef; they felt that they were getting into shallow waters; the lead, if they could have thrown it to any purpose, would not have shown more than three or four fathoms. The shipwrecked people heard the dull sound of the waves being sucked within the submarine caves of the steep rock. They made out, under the light-house, like a dark cutting between two plates of granite, the narrow passage of the ugly, wild-looking little harbor, supposed to be full of the skeletons of men and carcasses of ships. It looked like the mouth of a cavern, rather than the entrance of a port. They could hear the crackling of the pile on high within the iron grating. A ghastly purple illuminated the storm, the collision of the rain and hail disturbed the mist. The black cloud and the red flame fought, serpent against serpent; live ashes, reft by the wind, flew from the fire, and the sudden assaults of the sparks seemed to drive the snow-flakes before them. The breakers, blurred at first in outline, now stood out in bold relief, a medley of rocks with peaks, crests, and vertebræ. The angles were formed by strongly marked red lines, and the inclined planes in blood-like streams of light. As they neared it, the outline of the reefs increased and rose—sinister.

One of the women, the Irishwoman, told her beads wildly.

In place of the skipper, who was the pilot, remained the chief, who was the captain. The Basques all know the mountain and the sea. They are bold on the precipice, and inventive in catastrophes.

They neared the cliff. They were about to strike. Suddenly they were so close to the great north rock of the Caskets, that it shut out the



•-light-house from them. They saw nothing but the rock and the red light behind it. The huge rock looming in the mist, was like a gigantic black woman with a hood of fire.

That ill-famed rock is called the Biblet. It faces the north side the reef, which on the south is faced by another ridge, L'Etacq-aux-giulmets. The chief looked at the Biblet, and shouted:

"A man with a will to take a rope to the rock. Who can swim?"

No answer.

No one on board knew how to swim, not even the sailors. An ignorance not uncommon among sea-faring people.

A beam nearly free of its lashings was swinging loose. The chief clasped it with both hands, crying, "Help me."

They unlashed the beam. They had now at their disposal the very thing they wanted. From the defensive they assumed the offensive.

It was a longish beam of heart of oak, sound and strong, useful either as a support or as an engine of attack, a lever for a burden, a ram against a tower.

"Ready!" shouted the chief.

All six getting foothold on the stump of the mast, threw their weight on the spar projecting over the side, straight as a lance towards a projecting of the cliff.

It was a dangerous manœuvre. To strike at a mountain is audacity indeed. The six men might well have been thrown into the water by the shock.

There is variety in struggles with storms. After the hurricane, the shoal, after the wind, the rock. First the intangible, then the immovable, to be encountered.

Some minutes passed, such minutes as whiten men's hair.

The rock and the vessel were about to come in collision. The rock, like a culprit, awaited the blow.

A resistless wave rushed in; it ended the respite. It caught the vessel underneath, raised it, and swayed it for an instant as the sling swings its projectile.

"Steady!" cried the chief, "it is only a rock, and we are men."

The beam was couched, the six men were one with it, its sharp bolts tore their arm-pits, but they did not feel them.

The wave dashed the hooker against the rock.

Then came the shock.

It came under the shapeless cloud of foam which always hides such catastrophes.

When this cloud fell back into the sea, when the waves rolled back from the rock, the six men were tossing about the deck, but the *Matutina* was floating alongside the rock,—clear of it. The beam had stood and turned the vessel; the sea was running so fast, that in a few seconds she had left the Caskets behind.

Such things sometimes occur. It was a straight stroke of the bowsprit that saved Wood of Largo at the mouth of the Tay. In the wild neighborhood of Cape Winterton, and under the command of Captain

Hamilton, it was the appliance of such a lever against the dangerous rock, Branodu-um that saved the *Royal Mary* from shipwreck, although she was but a Scotch built frigate. The force of the waves can be so abruptly discomposed, that changes of direction can be easily managed, or at least are possible even in the most violent collisions. There is a brute in the tempest. The hurricane is a bull, and can be turned.

The whole secret of avoiding shipwreck, is to try and pass from the secant to the tangent.

Such was the service rendered by the beam to the vessel. It had done the work of an oar, had taken the place of a rudder. But the manœuvre once performed could not be repeated. The beam was overboard; the shock of the collision had wrenched it out of the men's hands, and it was lost in the waves. To loosen another beam would have been to dislocate the hull.

The hurricane carried off the *Matutina*. Presently the Caskets showed as a harmless encumbrance on the horizon. Nothing looks more out of countenance than a reef of rocks under such circumstances. There are in nature, in its obscure aspects, in which the visible blends with the invisible, certain motionless, surly profiles, which seem to express that a prey has escaped.

Thus glowered the Caskets while the *Matutina* fled.

The light-house paled in distance, faded, and disappeared.

There was something mournful in its extinction. Layers of mist sank down upon the now uncertain light. Its rays died in the waste of waters, the flame floated, struggled, sank, and lost its form. It might have been a drowning creature. The brasier dwindled to the snuff of a candle; then nothing more but a weak, uncertain flutter. Around it spread a circle of extravasated glimmer; it was like the quenching of light in the pit of night.

The bell which had threatened was dumb. The light-house which had threatened had melted away. And yet it was more awful now that they had ceased to threaten. One was a voice, the other a torch. There was something human about them.

They were gone, and nought remained but the abyss.

CHAPTER XIII

FACE TO FACE WITH NIGHT

GAIN was the hooker running with the shadow into immeasurable darkness.

The *Matutina*, escaped from the Caskets, sank and rose from billow to billow. A respite, but in chaos.

Spun round by the wind, tossed by all the thousand motions of the wave, she reflected every mad oscillation of the sea. She scarcely pitched at all, a terrible symptom of a ship's distress. Wrecks merely roll. Pitching is a convulsion of the strife. The helm alone can turn a vessel to the wind.

In storms, and more especially in the meteors of snow, sea and night end by melting into amalgamation, resolving into nothing but a smoke. Mists, whirlwinds, gales, motion in all directions, no basis, no shelter, no stop. Constant recommencement, one gulf succeeding another. No horizon visible; intense blackness for background. Through all these the hooker drifted.

To have got free of the Caskets, to have eluded the rock, was a victory for the shipwrecked men; but it was a victory which left them in stupor. They had raised no cheer; at sea such an imprudence is not repeated twice. To throw down a challenge where they could not cast the lead, would have been too serious a jest.

The repulse of the rock was an impossibility achieved. They were petrified by it. By degrees, however, they began to hope again. Such are the insubmergable mirages of the soul! There is no distress so complete but that even in the most critical moments the inexplicable sunrise of hope is seen in its depths. These poor wretches were ready to acknowledge to themselves that they were saved. It was on their lips.

But suddenly something terrible appeared to them in the darkness.

On the port bow arose, standing stark, cut out on the background of mist, a tall, opaque mass, vertical, right-angled, a tower of the abyss. They watched it open-mouthed.

The storm was driving them towards it.

They knew not what it was. It was the Ortach rock.



CHAPTER XIV

ORTACH

THE reef re-appeared. After the Caskets comes Ortach. The storm is no artist; brutal and all-powerful, it never varies its appliances. The darkness is inexhaustible. Its snares and perfidies never come to an end. As for man, he soon comes to the bottom of his resources. Man expends his strength, the abyss never.

The shipwrecked men turned towards the chief, their hope. He could only shrug his shoulders. Dismal contempt of helplessness.

A pavement in the midst of the ocean, such is the Ortach rock. The Ortach, all of a piece, rises up in a straight line to eighty feet above the angry beating of the waves. Waves and ships break against it. An immovable cube, it plunges its rectilinear planes apeak into the numberless serpentine curves of the sea.

At night it stands an enormous block resting on the folds of a huge black sheet. In time of storm it awaits the stroke of the axe, which is the thunder-clap.

But there is never a thunder-clap during the snow-storm. True, the ship has the bandage round her eyes; darkness is knotted about her; she is like one prepared to be led to the scaffold. As for the thunderbolt, which makes quick ending, it is not to be hoped for.

The *Matutina*, nothing better than a log upon the waters, drifted towards this rock, as she had drifted towards the other. The poor wretches on board, who had for a moment believed themselves saved, relapsed into their agony. The destruction they had left behind faced them again. The reef re-appeared from the bottom of the sea. Nothing had been gained.

The Caskets are a goffering iron with a thousand compartments.

The Ortach is a wall. To be wrecked on the Caskets is to be cut into ribbons; to strike on the Ortach is to be crushed into powder.

Nevertheless, there was one chance.

On a straight frontage such as that of the Ortach, neither the wave nor the cannon-ball can ricochet. The operation is simple; first the flux, then the reflux; a wave advancs, a billow returns.

In such cases the question of life and death is balanced thus; if the wave carries the vessel on the rock, she breaks on it and is lost; if the billow retires before the ship has touched, she is carried back, she is saved.

It was a moment of great anxiety; those on board saw through the gloom the great decisive wave bearing down on them. How far was it going to drag them? If the wave broke upon the ship, they were carried on the rock and dashed to pieces. If it passed under the ship . . . .

The wave *did* pass under.

They breathed again.

But what of the recoil? What would the surf do with them? The surf carried them back. A few minutes later the *Matutina* was free of the breakers. The Ortach faded from their view, as the Caskets had done. It was their second victory. For the second time the hooker had verged on destruction, and had drawn back in time.

CHAPTER XV

PORTENTOSUM MARE

MEANWHILE a thickening mist had descended on the drifting wretches. They were ignorant of their whereabouts, they could scarcely see a cable's length around. Despite a furious storm of hail which forced them to bend down their heads, the women had obstinately refused to go below again. No one, however hopeless, but wishes, if shipwreck be inevitable, to meet it in the open air. When so near death, a ceiling above one's head seems like the first outline of a coffin.

They were now in a short and chopping sea. A turgid sea indicates its constraint. Even in fog the entrance into a strait may be known by the boiling-like appearance of the waves. And thus it was, for they were unconsciously coasting Alderney. Between the west of Ortach and the Caskets and the east of Alderney the sea is hemmed in and cramped, and the uneasy position determines locally the condition of storms. The sea suffers like others, and when it suffers it is irritable. That channel is a thing to fear.

The *Matutina* was in it.

Imagine under the sea a tortoise shell as big as Hyde Park or the Champs Elysées, of which every striature is a shallow, and every embossment a reef. Such is the western approach of Alderney. The sea covers and conceals this shipwrecking apparatus. On this conglomeration of submarine breakers the cloven waves leap and foam—in calm weather, a chopping sea; in storms, a chaos.

The shipwrecked men observed this new complication without endeavoring to explain it to themselves. Suddenly they understood it. A pale vista broadened in the zenith; a wan tinge overspread the sea; the livid light revealed on the port side a long shoal stretching eastward,

towards which the power of the rushing wind was driving the vessel. The shoal was Alderney.

What was that shoal? They shuddered. They would have shuddered even more had a voice answered them—Alderney.

No isle so well defended against man's approach as Alderney. Below and above water it is protected by a savage guard, of which Ortach is the outpost. To the west, Burhou, Sauteriaux, Anfroque, Niangle, Fond du Croc, Les Jumelles, La Grosse, La Clanque, Les Eguillons, Le Vrac, La Fosse-Malière; to the east, Sauquet, Hommeau Floreau, La Brinebetais, La Queslingue, Croquelihou, La Fourche, Le Saut, Noire Pute, Coupie, Orbue. These are hydra-monsters of the species reef.

One of these reefs is called Le But, the goal, as if to imply that every voyage ends there.

This obstruction of rocks, simplified by night and sea, appeared to the shipwrecked men in the shape of a single dark band, a sort of black blot on the horizon.

Shipwreck is the ideal of helplessness; to be near land, and unable to reach it; to float, yet not to be able to do so in any desired direction; to rest the foot on what seems firm and is fragile; to be full of life, when o'ershadowed by death; to be the prisoner of space; to be walled in between sky and ocean; to have the infinite overhead like a dungeon; to be encompassed by the eluding elements of wind and waves; and to be seized, bound, paralyzed;—such a load of misfortune stupefies and crushes us. We imagine that in it we catch a glimpse of the sneer of the opponent who is beyond our reach. That which holds you fast is that which releases the birds and sets the fishes free. It appears nothing, and is everything. We are dependent on the air which is ruffled by our mouths; we are dependent on the water which we catch in the hollow of our hands. Draw a glassful from the storm, and it is but a cup of bitterness—a mouthful is nausea, a waveful is extermination. The grain of sand in the desert, the foam-flake on the sea, are fearful symptoms. Omnipotence takes no care to hide its atom, it changes weakness into strength, fills naught with all; and it is with the infinitely little that the infinitely great crushes you. It is with its drops the ocean dissolves you. You feel you are a plaything.

A plaything: ghastly epithet!

The *Matutina* was a little above Alderney, which was not an unfavorable position; but she was drifting towards its northern point, which was fatal. As a bent bow discharges its arrow, the nor'-wester was shooting the vessel towards the northern cape. Off that point, a

little beyond the harbor of Corbelets, is that which the seamen of the Norman archipelago call a "*singe*."

The "*singe*," or race, is a furious kind of current. A wreath of funnels in the shallows produces in the waves a wreath of whirlpools. You escape one to fall into another. A ship caught hold of by the race,



winds round and round until some sharp rock cleaves her hull; then the shattered vessel stops, her stern rises from the waves, the stem completes the revolution in the abyss, the stern sinks in, and all is sucked down. A circle of foam broadens and floats, and nothing more is seen on the surface of the waves but a few bubbles here and there rising from the smothered breathings below.

The three most dangerous races in the whole Channel are, one close to the well-known Girdler Sands, one at Jersey between the Pignonnet and the Point of Noirmont, and the race of Alderney.

Had a local pilot been on board the *Matutina*, he could have warned them of their fresh peril. In place of a pilot, they had their instinct. In situations of extreme danger men are endowed with second sight. High contortions of foam were flying along the coast in the frenzied raid of the wind. It was the spitting of the race. Many a bark has been swamped in that snare. Without knowing what awaited them, they approached the spot with horror.

How to double that cape? There were no means of doing it.

Just as they had seen, first the Caskets, then Ortach, rise before them, they now saw the point of Alderney, all of steep rock. It was like a number of giants, rising up one after another—a series of frightful duels.

Charybdis and Scylla are but two; the Caskets, Ortach and Alderney are three.

The phenomenon of the horizon being invaded by the rocks, was thus repeated with the grand monotony of the abyss. The battles of the ocean have the same sublime tautology as the combats of Homer.

Each wave, as they neared it, added twenty cubits to the cape, awfully magnified by the mist; the fast decreasing distance seemed more inevitable—they were touching the skirts of the race! The first fold which seized them would drag them in—another wave surmounted, and all would be over.

Suddenly the hooker was driven back, as by the blow of a Titan's fist. The wave reared up under the vessel and fell back, throwing the waif back in its mane of foam. The *Matutina*, thus impelled, drifted away from Alderney.

She was again on the open sea.

Whence had come the succor? From the wind. The breath of the storm had changed its direction.

The wave had played with them, now it was the wind's turn. They had saved themselves from the Caskets. Off Ortach it was the wave which had been their friend. Now it was the wind. The wind had suddenly veered from north to south. The sou'-wester had succeeded the nor'-wester.

The current is the wind in the waters; the wind is the current in the air. These two forces had just counteracted each other, and it had been the wind's will to snatch its prey from the current.

The sudden fantasies of ocean are uncertain. They are, perhaps,

an embodiment of the perpetual; when at their mercy man must neither hope nor despair. They do and they undo. The ocean amuses itself. Every shade of wild, untamed ferocity is phased in the vastness of that cunning sea, which Jean Bart used to call the "great brute." To its claws and their gashings succeed soft intervals of velvet paws. Sometimes the storm hurries on a wreck, at others it works out the problem with care; it might almost be said that it caresses it. The sea can afford to take its time, as men in their agonies find out.

We must own that occasionally these lulls of the torture announce deliverance. Such cases are rare. However this may be, men in extreme peril are quick to believe in rescue; the slightest pause in the storm's threats is sufficient; they tell themselves that they are out of danger. After believing themselves buried, they declare their resurrection; they feverishly embrace what they do not yet possess; it is clear that the bad luck has turned; they declare themselves satisfied; they are saved; they cry quits with God. They should not be in so great a hurry to give receipts to the Unknown.

The sou'-wester set in with a whirlwind. Shipwrecked men have never any but rough helpers. The *Matutina* was dragged rapidly out to sea by the remnant of her rigging—like a dead woman trailed by the hair. It was like the enfranchisement granted by Tiberius, at the price of violation. The wind treated with brutality those whom it saved; it rendered service with fury; it was help without pity.

The wreck was breaking up under the severity of its deliverers.

Hailstones, big and hard enough to charge a blunderbuss, smote the vessel; at every rotation of the waves these hailstones rolled about the deck like marbles. The hooker, whose deck was almost flush with the water, was being beaten out of shape by the rolling masses of water and its sheets of spray. On board it each man was for himself.

They clung on as best they could. As each sea swept over them, it was with a sense of surprise they saw that all were still there. Several had their faces torn by splinters.

Happily despair has stout hands. In terror a child's hand has the grasp of a giant. Agony makes a vise of a woman's fingers. A girl in her fright can almost bury her rose-colored fingers in a piece of iron. With hooked fingers they hung on somehow, as the waves dashed on and passed off them; but every wave brought them the fear of being swept away.

Suddenly they were relieved.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PROBLEM SUDDENLY WORKS IN SILENCE

THE hurricane had just stopped short. There was no longer in the air sou'-wester or nor'-wester. The fierce clarions of space were mute. The whole of the water-spout had poured from the sky without any warning of diminution, as if it had slided perpendicularly into a gulf beneath. None knew what had become of it; flakes replaced the hailstones, the snow began to fall slowly. No more swell: the sea flattened down.

Such sudden cessations are peculiar to snow-storms. The electric effluvium exhausted, all becomes still, even the wave, which in ordinary storms often remains agitated for a long time. In snow-storms it is not so. No prolonged anger in the deep. Like a tired-out worker it becomes drowsy directly, thus almost giving the lie to the laws of statics, but not astonishing old seamen, who know that the sea is full of unforeseen surprises.

The same phenomenon takes place, although very rarely, in ordinary storms. Thus, in our time, on the occasion of the memorable hurricane of July 27th, 1867, at Jersey the wind, after fourteen hours' fury, suddenly relapsed into a dead calm.

In a few minutes the hooker was floating in sleeping waters.

At the same time (for the last phase of these storms resembles the first) they could distinguish nothing; all that had been made visible in the convulsions of the meteoric cloud was again dark. Pale outlines were fused in vague mist, and the gloom of infinite space closed about the vessel. The wall of night—that circular occlusion, that interior of a cylinder the diameter of which was lessening minute by minute—enveloped the *Matutina*, and, with the sinister deliberation of an encroaching iceberg, was drawing in dangerously. In the zenith nothing

—a lid of fog closing down. It was as if the hooker were at the bottom of the well of the abyss.

In that well the sea was a puddle of liquid lead. No stir in the waters—ominous immobility! The ocean is never less tamed than when it is still as a pool.



All was silence, stillness, blindness.

Perchance the silence of inanimate objects is taciturnity.

The last ripples glided along the hull. The deck was horizontal, with an insensible slope to the sides. Some broken planks were shifting about irresolutely. The block on which they had lighted the tow steeped in tar, in place of the signal light which had been swept away, swung

no longer at the prow, and no longer let fall burning drops into the sea. What little breeze remained in the clouds was noiseless. The snow fell thickly, softly, with scarce a slant. No foam of breakers could be heard. The peace of shadows was over all.

This repose succeeding all the past exasperations and paroxysms was, for the poor creatures so long tossed about, an unspeakable comfort. It was as though the punishment of the rack had ceased. They caught a glimpse about them and above them of something which seemed like a consent that they should be saved. They regained confidence. All that had been fury was now tranquillity. It appeared to them a pledge of peace. Their wretched hearts dilated. They were able to let go the end of rope or beam to which they had clung, to rise, hold themselves up, stand, walk, move about. They felt inexpressibly calmed. There are in the depths of darkness such phases of paradise, preparations for other things. It was clear that they were delivered out of the storm, out of the foam, out of the wind, out of the uproar.

Henceforth all the chances were in their favor. In three or four hours it would be sunrise. They would be seen by some passing ship; they would be rescued. The worst was over, they were re-entering life. The important feat was to have been able to keep afloat until the cessation of the tempest. They said to themselves, "It is all over this time."

Suddenly they found that all was indeed over.

One of the sailors, the northern Basque, Galdeazun by name, went down into the hold to look for a rope, then came above again and said:

"The hold is full."

"Of what?" asked the chief.

"Of water," answered the sailor.

The chief cried out:

"What does that mean?"

"It means," replied Galdeazun, "that in half an hour we shall founder."

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAST RESOURCE

THERE was a hole in the keel. A leak had been sprung. When it happened no one could have said. Was it when they touched the Caskets? Was it off Ortach? Was it when they were whirled about the shallows west of Alderney? It was most probable that they had touched some rock there. They had struck against some hidden buttress which they had not felt in the midst of the convulsive fury of the wind which was tossing them. In tetanus who would feel a prick?

The other sailor, the southern Basque, whose name was Ave Maria, went down into the hold, too, came on deck again, and said:

"There are two varas of water in the hold."

About six feet.

Ave Maria added:

"In less than forty minutes we shall sink."

Where was the leak? They couldn't find it. It was hidden by the water which was filling up the hold. The vessel had a hole in her hull somewhere under the water-line, quite forward in the keel. Impossible to find it—impossible to check it. They had a wound which they could not staunch. The water, however, was not rising very fast.

The chief called out:

"We must work the pump."

Galdeazun replied: "We have no pump left."

"Then," said the chief, "we must make for land."

"Where is the land?"

"I don't know."

"Nor I."

"But it must be somewhere."

"True enough."

"Let some one steer for it."

"We have no pilot."

"Stand to the tiller yourself."

"We have lost the tiller."

"Let's rig one out of the first beam we can lay hands on. Nails—a hammer—quick—some tools."

"The carpenter's box is overboard; we have no tools."

"We'll steer all the same; no matter where."

"The rudder is lost."

"Where is the boat? We'll get in and row."

"The boat is lost."

"We'll row the wreck."

"We have lost the oars."

"We'll sail."

"We have lost the sails, and the mast."

"We'll rig one up with a pole and a tarpaulin for sail. Let's get clear of this and trust in the wind."

"There is no wind."

The wind, indeed, had left them, the storm had fled, and its departure, which they had believed to mean safety, meant, in fact, destruction. Had the sou'-wester continued it might have driven them wildly on some shore, might have beaten the leak in speed—might, perhaps, have carried them to some propitious sandbank, and cast them on it before the hooker foundered. The swiftness of the storm, bearing them away, might have enabled them to reach land; but no more wind, no more hope. They were going to die because the hurricane was over.

The end was near!

Wind, hail, the hurricane, the whirlwind—these are wild combatants that may be overcome; the storm can be taken in the weak point of its armor; there are resources against the violence which continually lays itself open, is off its guard, and often hits wide. But nothing is to be done against a calm; it offers nothing to the grasp, of which you can lay hold.

The winds are a charge of Cossacks; stand your ground and they disperse. Calms are the pincers of the executioner.

The water, deliberate and sure, irrepressible and heavy, rose in the hold, and as it rose, the vessel sank—it was happening slowly.

Those on board the wreck of the *Matutina* felt that most hopeless of catastrophes—an inert catastrophe undermining them. The still and sinister certainty of their fate petrified them. No stir in the air, no movement on the sea. The motionless is the inexorable. Absorption

was sucking them down silently. Through the depths of the dumb waters—without anger, without passion, not willing, not knowing, not caring—the fatal centre of the globe was attracting them downwards. Horror in repose amalgamating them with itself. It was no longer the wide open mouth of the sea, the double jaw of the wind and the wave, vicious in its threat, the grin of the water-spout, the foaming appetite of the breakers—it was as if the wretched beings had under them the black yawn of the infinite.

They felt themselves sinking into Death's peaceful depths. The height between the vessel and the water was lessening—that was all. They could calculate her disappearance to the moment. It was the exact reverse of submersion by the rising tide. The water was not rising towards them, they were sinking towards it. They were digging their own grave. Their own weight was their sexton.

They were being executed, not by the law of man, but by the law of things.

The snow was falling, and as the wreck was now motionless, this white lint made a cloth over the deck and covered the vessel as with a winding-sheet.

The hold was becoming fuller and deeper—no means of getting at the leak. They struck a light and fixed three or four torches in holes as best they could. Galdeazun brought some old leathern buckets, and they tried to bale the hold out, standing in a row to pass them from hand to hand, but the buckets were past use, the leather of some was unstitched, there were holes in the bottoms of the others, and the buckets emptied themselves on the way. The difference in quantity between the water which was making its way in and that which they returned to the sea was ludicrous—for a ton that entered a glassful was baled out; they did not improve their condition. It was like the expenditure of a miser, trying to exhaust a million, half-penny by half-penny.

The chief said, "Let us lighten the wreck."

During the storm they had lashed together the few chests which were on deck. These remained tied to the stump of the mast. They undid the lashings and rolled the chests overboard through a breach in the gunwale. One of these trunks belonged to the Basque woman, who could not repress a sigh.

"Oh, my new cloak lined with scarlet! Oh, my poor stockings of birchen-bark lace! Oh, my silver ear-rings to wear at mass on May-day!"

The deck cleared, there remained the cabin to be seen to. It was greatly encumbered; in it were, as may be remembered, the luggage

belonging to the passengers, and the bales belonging to the sailors. They took the luggage, and threw it over the gunwale. They carried up the bales and cast them into the sea.

Thus they emptied the cabin. The lantern, the cap, the barrels, the sacks, the bales, and the water-butts, the pot of soup, all went over into the waves.

They unscrewed the nuts of the iron stove, long since extinguished; they pulled it out, hoisted it on deck, dragged it to the side, and threw it out of the vessel.

They cast overboard everything they could pull out of the deck—chains, shrouds, and torn rigging.

From time to time the chief took a torch, and throwing its light on the figures painted on the prow to show the draft of water, looked to see how deep the wreck had settled down.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HIGHEST RESOURCE

THE wreck being lightened, was sinking more slowly, but none the less surely.

The hopelessness of their situation was without resource—without mitigation; they had exhausted their last expedient.

"Is there anything else we can throw overboard?"

The doctor, whom every one had forgotten, rose from the companion, and said:

"Yes."

"What?" asked the chief.

The doctor answered, "Our Crime."

They shuddered, and all cried out:

"Amen."

The doctor standing up, pale, raised his hand to heaven, saying:

"Kneel down."

They wavered—to waver is the preface to kneeling down.

The doctor went on:

"Let us throw our crimes into the sea, they weigh us down; it is they that are sinking the ship. Let us think no more of safety—let us think of salvation. Our last crime, above all, the crime which we committed, or rather completed, just now; oh, wretched beings who are listening to me, it is that which is overwhelming us. For those who leave intended murder behind them, it is an impious insolence to tempt the abyss. He who sins against a child, sins against God. True, we were obliged to put to sea, but it was certain perdition. The storm, warned by the shadow of our crime, came on. It is well. Regret nothing, however. There, not far off in the darkness, are the sands of Vauville and Cape La Hogue. It is France. There was but one pos-

sible shelter for us, which was Spain. France is no less dangerous to us than England. Our deliverance from the sea would have led but to the gibbet. Hanged or drowned—we had no alternative. God has chosen for us; let us give him thanks. He has vouchsafed us the grave which cleanses. Brethren, the inevitable hand is in it. Remember that it was we who just now did our best to send on high that child, and that at this very moment, now as I speak, there is, perhaps, above our heads, a soul accusing us before a Judge whose eye is on us. Let us make the best use of this last respite; let us make an effort, if we still may, to repair, as far as we are able, the evil that we have wrought. If the child survives us, let us come to his aid; if he is dead, let us seek his forgiveness. Let us cast our crime from us. Let us ease our consciences of its weight. Let us strive that our souls be not swallowed up before God, for that is the awful shipwreck. Bodies go to the fishes, souls to the devils. Have pity on yourselves. Kneel down, I tell you. Repentance is the bark which never sinks. You have lost your compass! You are wrong! You still have prayer."

The wolves became lambs—such transformations occur in last agonies; tigers lick the crucifix; when the dark portal opens ajar, belief is difficult, unbelief impossible. However imperfect may be the different sketches of religion essayed by man, even when his belief is shapeless, even when the outline of the dogma is not in harmony with the lineaments of the eternity he foresees, there comes in his last hour a trembling of the soul. There is something which will begin when life is over; this thought impresses the last pang.

A man's dying agony is the expiration of a term. In that fatal second he feels weighing on him a diffused responsibility. That which has been complicates that which is to be. The past returns and enters into the future. What is known becomes as much an abyss as the unknown. And the two chasms, the one which is full by his faults, the other of his anticipations, mingle their reverberations. It is this confusion of the two gulfs which terrifies the dying man.

They had spent their last grain of hope on the direction of life; hence they turned in the other. Their only remaining chance was in its dark shadow. They understood it. It came on them as a lugubrious flash, followed by a relapse of horror. That which is intelligible to the dying man is as what is perceived in the lightning. Everything, then nothing; you see, then all is blindness. After death the eye will re-open, and that which was a flash will become a sun.

They cried out to the doctor:

"Thou, thou, there is no one but thee. We will obey thee; what must we do? speak."



"CAST YOUR CRIMES INTO THE SEA."

The doctor answered:

"The question is how to pass over the unknown precipice, and reach the other bank of life, which is beyond the tomb. Being the one who knows the most, my danger is greater than yours. You do well to leave the choice of the bridge to him whose burden is the heaviest."

He added:

"Knowledge is a weight added to conscience."

He continued:

"How much time have we still?"

Galdeazun looked at the water-mark, and answered:

"A little more than a quarter of an hour."

"Good," said the doctor.

The low hood of the companion on which he leant his elbows made a sort of table; the doctor took from his pocket his inkhorn and pen, and his pocket-book out of which he drew a parchment, the same one on the back of which he had written, a few hours before, some twenty cramped and crooked lines.

"A light," he said.

The snow, falling like the spray of a cataract, had extinguished the torches one after another; there was but one left. Ave Maria took it out of the place where it had been stuck, and holding it in his hand, came and stood by the doctor's side.

The doctor replaced his pocket-book in his pocket, put down the pen and inkhorn on the hood of the companion, unfolded the parchment, and said:

"Listen."

Then in the midst of the sea, on the sinking deck (a sort of shuddering flooring of the tomb), the doctor began a solemn reading, to which all the shadows seemed to listen. The doomed men bowed their heads around him. The flaming of the torch intensified their pallor. What the doctor read was written in English. Now and then, when one of those woe-begone looks seemed to ask an explanation, the doctor would stop, to repeat—whether in French, or Spanish, Basque, or Italian—the passage he had just read. Stifled sobs and hollow beatings of the breast were heard. The wreck was sinking more and more.

The reading over, the doctor placed the parchment flat on the companion, seized his pen, and on a clear margin which he had carefully left at the bottom of what he had written, he signed himself:

Gerhadus Geestemunde: DOCTOR.

Then, turning towards the others, he said:

"Come, and sign."

The Basque woman approached, took the pen, and signed herself, ASUNCION.

She handed the pen to the Irish woman, who, not knowing how to write, made a cross.

The doctor, by the side of this cross, wrote, BARBARA FERMOY, *of Tyrrif Island, in the Hebrides.*

Then he handed the pen to the chief of the band.

The chief signed, GAIZDORRA: *Captal.*

The Genoese signed himself under the chief's name, GIANGIRATE.

The Languedocian signed, JACQUES QUARTOURZE: *alias, the Narbonnais.*

The Provençal signed, LUC-PIERRE CAPGAROUPE, *of the Galleys of Mahon.*

Under these signatures the doctor added a note:

"Of the crew of three men, the skipper having been washed overboard by a sea, but two remain, and they have signed."

The two sailors affixed their names underneath the note. The northern Basque signed himself, GALDEAZUN.

The southern Basque signed, AVE MARIA: *Thief.*

Then the doctor said:

"Capgaroupe."

"Here," said the Provençal.

"Have you Hardquanonne's flask?"

"Yes."

"Give it me."

Capgaroupe drank off the last mouthful of brandy, and handed the flask to the doctor.

The water was rising in the hold; the wreck was sinking deeper into the sea. The sloping edges of the ship were covered by a thin gnawing wave, which was rising. All were crowded on the centre of the deck.

The doctor dried the ink on the signatures by the heat of the torch, and folding the parchment into a narrower compass than the diameter of the neck, put it into the flask. He called for the cork.

"I don't know where it is," said Capgaroupe.

"Here is a piece of rope," said Jacques Quartourze.

The doctor corked the flask with a bit of rope, and asked for some tar. Galdeazun went forward, extinguished the signal light with a piece of tow, took the vessel in which it was contained from the stern, and brought it, half full of burning tar, to the doctor.

The flask holding the parchment which they had all signed, was corked and tarred over.

"It is done," said the doctor.

And from out all their mouths, vaguely stammered in every language, came the dismal utterances of the catacombs.

"*Ainsi soit-il!*"

"*Meâ culpâ!*"

"*Asi sea!*"

"*Aro raï!*"

"Amen!"

It was as though the sombre voices of Babel were scattered through the shadows as Heaven uttered its awful refusal to hear them.

The doctor turned away from his companions in crime and distress, and took a few steps towards the gunwale. Reaching the side, he looked into space, and said, in a deep voice:

"*Bist du bei mir?*"

Perchance he was addressing some phantom.

The wreck was sinking.

Behind the doctor all the others were in a dream. Prayer mastered them by main force. They did not bow, they were bent. There was something involuntary in their contrition; they wavered as a sail flaps when the breeze fails. And the haggard group took by degrees, with clasping of hands and prostration of foreheads, attitudes various, yet of humiliation. Some strange reflection of the deep seemed to soften their villainous features.

The doctor returned towards them. Whatever had been his past, the old man was great in the presence of the catastrophe.

The deep reserve of nature which enveloped him preoccupied without disconcerting him. He was not one to be taken unawares. Over him was the calm of a silent horror: on his countenance the majesty of God's will comprehended.

This old and thoughtful outlaw unconsciously assumed the air of a pontiff.

He said:

"Attend to me."

He contemplated for a moment the waste of water, and added:

"Now we are going to die."

Then he took the torch from the hands of Ave Maria, and waved it.

A spark broke from it and flew into the night.

Then the doctor cast the torch into the sea.

The torch was extinguished: all light disappeared. Nothing left but the huge, unfathomable shadow. It was like the filling up of the grave.

In the darkness, the doctor was heard saying:

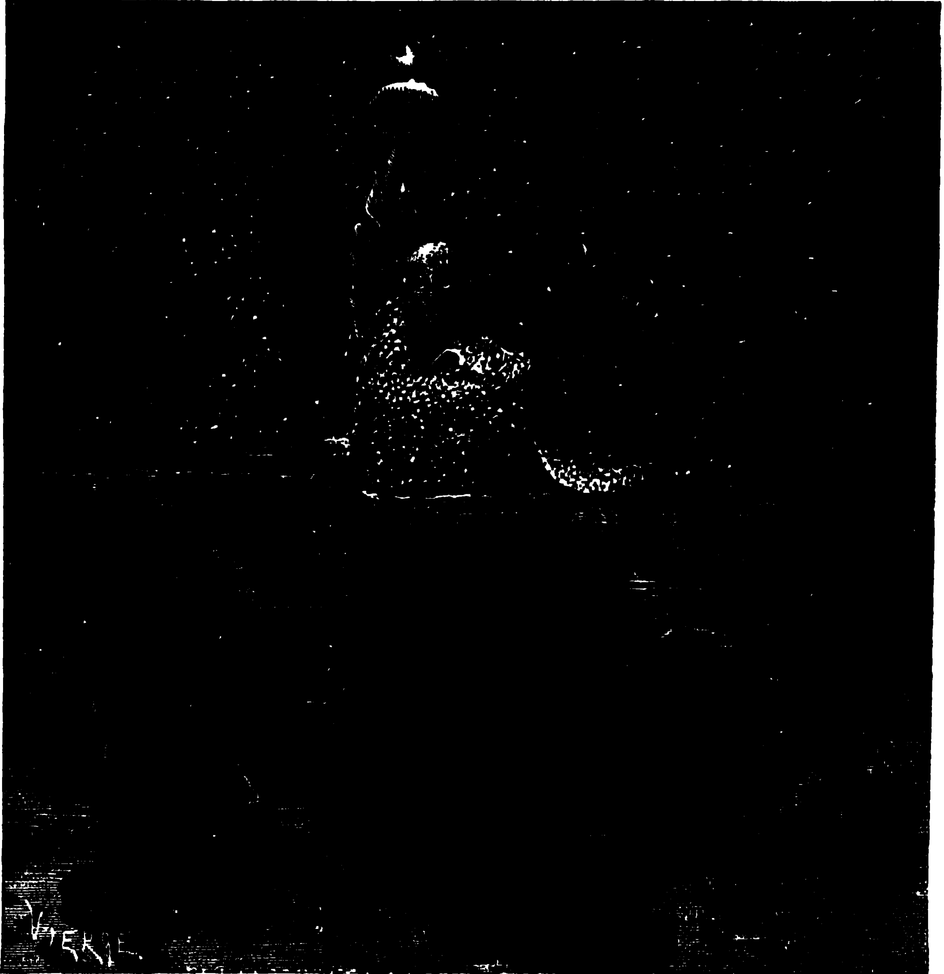
"Let us pray."

All knelt down.

It was no longer on the snow, but in the water, that they knelt.

They had but a few minutes more.

The doctor alone remained standing.



The flakes of snow falling on him had sprinkled him with white tears, and made him visible on the background of darkness. He might have been the speaking statue of the shadow.

The doctor made the sign of the cross and raised his voice, while beneath his feet he felt that almost imperceptible oscillation which prefaces the moment in which a wreck is about to founder. He said:

"Pater noster qui es in cœlis."

The Provençal repeated in French:

"Notre Père qui êtes aux cieux."

The Irishwoman repeated in Gaelic, understood by the Basque woman:

"Ar nathair ata ar neamh."

The doctor continued:

"Sanctificetur nomen tuum."

"Que votre nom soit sanctifié," said the Provençal.

"Naomhthar hainm," said the Irishwoman.

"Adveniat regnum tuum," continued the doctor.

"Que votre règne arrive," said the Provençal.

"Tigeadh do rioghachd," said the Irishwoman.

As they knelt, the waters had risen to their shoulders. The doctor went on:

"Fiat voluntas tua."

"Que votre volonté soit faite," stammered the Provençal.

And the Irishwoman and Basque woman cried:

"Deuntar do thoil ar an Hhalàmb."

"Sicut in cœlo, sicut in terra," said the doctor.

No voice answered him.

He looked down. All their heads were under water. They had let themselves be drowned on their knees.

The doctor took in his right hand the flask which he had placed on the companion, and raised it above his head.

The wreck was going down. As he sank, the doctor murmured the rest of the prayer.

For an instant his shoulders were above water, then his head, then nothing remained but his arm holding up the flask, as if he were showing it to the Infinite.

His arm disappeared; there was no greater fold on the deep sea than there would have been on a tun of oil. The snow continued falling.

One thing floated, and was carried by the waves into the darkness. It was the tarred flask, kept afloat by its osier cover.

BOOK III

THE CHILD IN THE SHADOW

CHAPTER I

CHESIL


HE storm was no less severe on land than on sea. The same wild enfranchisement of the elements had taken place around the abandoned child. The weak and innocent become their sport in the expenditure of the unreasoning rage of their blind forces. Shadows discern not, and things inanimate have not the clemency they are supposed to possess.

On the land there was but little wind. There was an inexplicable dumbness in the cold. There was no hail. The thickness of the falling snow was fearful.

Hailstones strike, harass, bruise, stun, crush. Snow-flakes do worse: soft and inexorable, the snow-flake does its work in silence, touch it, and it melts. It is pure, even as the hypocrite is candid. It is by white particles slowly heaped upon each other that the flake becomes an avalanche and the knave a criminal.

The child continued to advance into the mist. The fog presents but a soft obstacle; hence its danger. It yields, and yet persists. Mist, like snow, is full of treachery. The child, strange wrestler at war with all these risks, had succeeded in reaching the bottom of the descent, and

had gained Chesil. Without knowing it he was on an isthmus, with the ocean on each side; so that he could not lose his way in the fog, in the snow, or in the darkness, without falling into the deep waters of the gulf on the right hand, or into the raging billows of the high sea on the left. He was traveling on, in ignorance, between these two abysses.

The Isthmus of Portland was at this period singularly sharp and



rugged. Nothing remains at this date of its past configuration. Since the idea of manufacturing Portland stone into Roman cement was first seized, the whole rock has been subjected to an alteration which has completely changed its original appearance. Calcareous lias, slate, and trap, are still to be found there, rising from layers of conglomerate, like teeth from a gum; but the pickaxe has broken up and leveled those bristling, rugged peaks which were once the fearful perches of the ossifrage. The summits exist no longer where the labbes and the skua gulls used to flock together, soaring, like the envious, to sully high places. In vain might you seek the tall monolith called Godolphin, an

old British word, signifying "*white eagle.*" In summer you may still gather on those surfaces, pierced and perforated like a sponge, rosemary, pennyroyal, wild hyssop, and sea-fennel, which when infused makes a good cordial, and that herb full of knots, which grows in the sand and from which they make matting; but you no longer find gray amber, or black tin, or that triple species of slate—one sort green, one blue, and the third the color of sage-leaves. The foxes, the badgers, the otters, and the martens have taken themselves off; on the cliffs of Portland, as well as at the extremity of Cornwall, where there were at one time chamois, none remain. They still fish in some inlets for plaice and pilchards; but the seared salmon no longer ascend the Wey, between Michaelmas and Christmas, to spawn. No more are seen there, as during the reign of Elizabeth, those old unknown birds as large as hawks, who cut an apple in two, but ate only the pips. You never meet those crows with yellow beaks, called Cornish choughs in English, *pyrrocorax* in Latin, who, in their mischief, would drop burning twigs on thatched roofs. Nor that magic bird, the fulmar, a wanderer from the Scottish archipelago, dropping from his bill an oil which the islanders used to burn in their lamps. Nor do you ever find in the evening, in the plash of the ebbing tide, that ancient, legendary neitse, with the feet of a hog and the bleat of a calf. The tide no longer throws up the whiskered seal, with its curled ears and sharp jaws, dragging itself along on its nailless paws. On that Portland—nowadays so changed as scarcely to be recognized—the absence of forests precluded nightingales; but now the falcon, the swan, and the wild goose have fled. The sheep of Portland, nowadays, are fat and have fine wool; the few scattered ewes which nibbled the salt grass there two centuries ago, were small and tough and coarse in the fleece, as became Celtic flocks brought there by garlic-eating shepherds, who lived to a hundred, and who, at the distance of half a mile, could pierce a cuirass with their yard-long arrows. Uncultivated land makes coarse wool. The Chesil of to-day resembles in no particular the Chesil of the past, so much has it been disturbed by man and by those furious winds which gnaw the very stones.

At present this tongue of land bears a railway, terminating in a pretty square of houses, called Chesilton, and there is a Portland station. Railway carriages roll where seals used to crawl.

The Isthmus of Portland two hundred years ago was a back of sand, with a vertebral-spine of rock.

The child's danger changed its form. What he had had to fear in the descent was falling to the bottom of the precipice; in the isthmus, it was falling into the holes. After dealing with the precipice, he must deal with the pitfalls. Everything on the sea-shore is a trap—the rock

is slippery, the strand is quicksand. Resting-places are but snares. It is walking on ice which may suddenly crack and yawn with a fissure, through which you disappear. The ocean has false stages below, like a well-arranged theatre.

The long backbone of granite, from which fall away both slopes of



the isthmus, is awkward of access. It is difficult to find there what, in scene-shifters' language, are termed *practicables*. Man has no hospitality to hope for from the ocean; from the rock no more than from the wave. The sea is provident for the bird and the fish alone. Isthmuses are especially naked and rugged; the wave, which wears and mines them on either side, reduces them to the simplest form. Everywhere there

were sharp relief ridges, cuttings, frightful fragments of torn stone, yawning with many points, like the jaws of a shark; breaknecks of wet moss, rapid slopes of rock ending in the sea. Whosoever undertakes to pass over an isthmus meets at every step misshapen blocks, as large as houses, in the forms of shin-bones, shoulder-blades, and thigh-bones, the hideous anatomy of dismembered rocks. It is not without reason that these *striæ* of the sea-shore are called ribs.

The wayfarer must get out as he best can from the confusion of these ruins. It is like journeying over the bones of an enormous skeleton.

Put a child to this labor of Hercules.

Broad daylight might have aided him. It was night. A guide was necessary. He was alone. All the vigor of manhood would not have been too much. He had but the feeble strength of a child. In default of a guide, a footpath might have aided him; there was none.

By instinct he avoided the sharp ridge of the rocks, and kept to the strand as much as possible. It was there that he met with the pitfalls. They were multiplied before him under three forms: the pitfall of water, the pitfall of snow, and the pitfall of sand. This last is the most dangerous of all, because the most illusory To know the peril we face is alarming; to be ignorant of it, is terrible. The child was fighting against unknown dangers. He was groping his way through something which might, perhaps, be the grave.

He did not hesitate. He went round the rocks, avoided the crevices, guessed at the pitfalls, obeyed the twistings and turnings caused by such obstacles; yet he went on. Though unable to advance in a straight line, he walked with a firm step. When necessary he drew back with energy. He knew how to tear himself in time from the horrid bird-lime of the quicksands. He shook the snow from about him. He entered the water more than once up to the knees. Directly that he left it, his wet knees were frozen by the intense cold of the night. He walked rapidly in his stiffened garments; yet he took care to keep his sailor's coat dry and warm on his chest. He was still tormented by hunger.

The chances of the abyss are illimitable. Everything is possible in it, even salvation. The issue may be found, though it be invisible. How the child, wrapped in a smothering winding-sheet of snow, lost on a narrow elevation between two jaws of an abyss, managed to cross the isthmus is what he could not himself have explained. He had slipped, climbed, rolled, searched, walked, persevered, that is all. Such is the secret of all triumphs. At the end of somewhat less than half an hour

he felt that the ground was rising. He had reached the other shore. Leaving Chesil, he had gained terra firma.

The bridge which now unites Sandford Castle with Smallmouth Sands did not then exist. It is probable that in his intelligent groping he had re-ascended as far as Wyke Regis, where there was then a tongue of sand, a natural road crossing East Fleet.

He was saved from the isthmus; but he found himself again face to face with the tempest, with the cold, with the night.

Before him once more lay the plain, shapeless in the density of impenetrable shadow. He examined the ground, seeking a footpath. Suddenly he bent down. He had discovered, in the snow, something which seemed to him a track.

It was indeed a track—the print of a foot. The print was cut out clearly in the whiteness of the snow, which rendered it distinctly visible. He examined it. It was a naked foot; too small for that of a man, too large for that of a child.

It was probably the foot of a woman. Beyond that mark was another, then another, then another. The foot-prints followed each other at the distance of a step, and struck across the plain to the right. They were still fresh, and slightly covered with little snow. A woman had just passed that way.

This woman was walking in the direction in which the child had seen the smoke. With his eyes fixed on the foot-prints, he set himself to follow them.



CHAPTER II

THE EFFECT OF SNOW

HE journeyed some time along this course. Unfortunately the foot-prints were becoming less and less distinct. Dense and fearful was the falling of the snow. It was the time when the hooker was so distressed by the snow-storm at sea.

The child, in distress like the vessel, but after another fashion, had, in the inextricable intersection of shadows which rose up before him, no resource but the footsteps in the snow, and he held to it as the thread of the labyrinth.

Suddenly, whether the snow had filled them up or for some other reason, the footsteps ceased. All became even, level, smooth, without a stain, without a detail. There was now nothing but a white cloth drawn over the earth, and a black one over the sky. It seemed as if the foot-passenger had flown away. The child, in despair, bent down and searched; but in vain.

As he arose he had a sensation of hearing some indistinct sound, but he could not be sure of it. It resembled a voice, a breath, a shadow. It was more human than animal; more sepulchral than living. It was a sound, but the sound of a dream.

He looked, but saw nothing.

Solitude, wide, naked and livid, was before him. He listened. That which he had thought he heard had faded away. Perhaps it had been but fancy. He still listened. All was silent.

There was illusion in the mist.

He went on his way again. He walked forward at random, with nothing thenceforth to guide him.

As he moved away the noise began again. This time he could doubt it no longer. It was a groan, almost a sob.

He turned. He searched the darkness of space with his eyes. He

saw nothing, The sound arose once more. If limbo could cry out, it would cry in such a tone.

Nothing so penetrating, so piercing, so feeble as the voice—for it was a voice. It arose from a soul. There was palpitation in the murmur. Nevertheless, it seemed uttered almost unconsciously. It was an appeal of suffering, not knowing that it suffered or that it appealed.

The cry,—perhaps a first breath, perhaps a last sigh,—was equally distant from the rattle which closes life and the wail with which it commences. It breathed, it was stifled, it wept, a gloomy supplication from the depths of night. The child fixed his attention everywhere, far, near, on high, below. There was no one. There was nothing. He listened. The voice arose again. He perceived it distinctly. The sound somewhat resembled the bleating of a lamb.

Then he was frightened, and thought of flight.

The groan again. This was the fourth time. It was strangely miserable and plaintive. One felt that after that last effort, more mechanical than voluntary, the cry would probably be extinguished. It was an expiring exclamation, instinctively appealing to the amount of aid held in suspense in space. It was some muttering of agony, addressed to a possible Providence.

The child approached in the direction from whence the sound came.

Still he saw nothing.

He advanced again, watchfully.

The complaint continued. Inarticulate and confused as it was, it had become clear—almost vibrating. The child was near the voice; but where was it?

He was close to a complaint. The trembling of a cry passed by his side into space. A human moan floated away into the darkness. This was what he had met. Such at least was his impression, dim as the dense mist in which he was lost.

While he hesitated between an instinct which urged him to fly, and an instinct which commanded him to remain, he perceived in the snow at his feet, a few steps before him, a sort of undulation of the dimensions of a human body—a little eminence, low, long, and narrow, like the mould over a grave—a sepulchre in a white church-yard.

At the same time the voice cried out. It was from beneath the undulation that it proceeded. The child bent down, crouching before the undulation, and with both his hands began to clear it away.

Beneath the snow which he removed a form grew under his hands; and suddenly in the hollow he had made there appeared a pale face.

The cry had not proceeded from that face. Its eyes were shut, and the mouth open but full of snow.

It remained motionless; it stirred not under the hands of the child. The child, whose fingers were numbed with frost, shuddered when he touched its coldness. It was that of a woman. Her disheveled hair was mingled with the snow. The woman was dead.

Again the child set himself to sweep away the snow. The neck of the dead woman appeared; then her shoulders, clothed in rags. Suddenly he felt something move feebly under his touch. It was something small that was buried, and which stirred. The child swiftly cleared away the snow, discovering a wretched little body—thin, wan with cold, still alive, lying naked on the dead woman's naked breast.

It was a little girl.

It had been swaddled up, but in rags so scanty that in its struggles it had freed itself from its tatters. Under it, its attenuated limbs, and above it, its breath, had somewhat melted the snow. A nurse would have said that it was five or six months old, but perhaps it might be a year, for growth, in poverty, suffers heart-breaking reductions which sometimes even produce rachitis. When its face was exposed to the air, it gave a cry, the continuation of its sobs of distress. For the mother not to have heard that sob, proved her irrevocably dead.

The child took the infant in his arms.

The stiffened body of the mother was a fearful sight; a spectral light proceeded from her face. The mouth, apart and without breath, seemed to form in the indistinct language of shadows her answer to the questions put to the dead by the Invisible. The ghastly reflection of the icy plains was on that countenance. There was the youthful forehead under the brown hair, the almost indignant knitting of the eyebrows, the pinched nostrils, the closed eyelids, the lashes glued together by the rime, and from the corners of the eyes to the corners of the mouth, a deep channel of tears. The snow lighted up the corpse. Winter and the tomb are not adverse. The corpse is the icicle of man. The nakedness of her breasts was pathetic. They had fulfilled their purpose. On them was a sublime blight of the life infused into one being by another from whom life has fled, and maternal majesty was there instead of virginal purity. At the point of one of the nipples was a white pearl. It was a drop of milk frozen.

Let us explain at once. On the plains over which the deserted boy was passing in his turn, a beggar woman, nursing her infant and searching for a refuge, had lost her way a few hours before. Benumbed with cold she had sunk under the tempest, and could not rise again.

The falling snow had covered her. So long as she was able she had clasped her little girl to her bosom, and thus died.

The infant had tried to suck the marble breast. Blind trust, inspired by nature, for it seems that it is possible for a woman to suckle her child even after her last sigh.



But the lips of the infant had been unable to find the breast, where the drop of milk, stolen by death, had frozen, whilst under the snow the child, more accustomed to the cradle than the tomb, had wailed.

The deserted child had heard the cry of the dying child.

He disinterred it.

He took it in his arms.

When she felt herself in his arms she ceased crying. The faces of the two children touched each other, and the purple lips of the infant sought the cheek of the boy, as it had been a breast. The little girl had nearly reached the moment when the congealed blood stops the action of the heart. Her mother had touched her with the chill of her own death—a corpse communicates death; its numbness is infectious. Her feet, hands, arms, knees, seemed paralyzed by cold. The boy felt the terrible chill. He had on him a garment dry and warm—his pilot jacket. He placed the infant on the breast of the corpse, took off his jacket, wrapped the infant in it, took it up again in his arms, and now, almost naked, under the blast of the north wind which covered him with eddies of snow-flakes, carrying the infant, he pursued his journey.

The little one having succeeded in finding the boy's cheek, again applied her lips to it, and, soothed by the warmth, she slept. First kiss of those two souls in the darkness.

The mother lay there, her back to the snow, her face to the night; but perhaps at the moment when the little boy stripped himself to clothe the little girl, the mother saw him from the depths of infinity.

CHAPTER III

A BURDEN MAKES A ROUGH ROAD ROUGHER

IT was little more than four hours since the hooker had sailed from the creek of Portland, leaving the boy on the shore. During the long hours since he had been deserted, and had been journeying onwards, he had met but three persons of that human society into which he was, perchance, about to enter. A man—the man on the hill—a woman—the woman in the snow—and the little girl whom he was carrying in his arms.

He was exhausted by fatigue and hunger, yet advanced more resolutely than ever, with less strength and an added burden. He was now almost naked. The few rags which remained to him, hardened by the frost, were sharp as glass, and cut his skin. He became colder, but the infant was warmer. That which he lost was not thrown away, but was gained by her. He found out that the poor infant enjoyed the comfort which was to her the renewal of life. He continued to advance.

From time to time, still holding her securely, he bent down, and taking a handful of snow he rubbed his feet with it, to prevent their being frost-bitten. At other times, his throat feeling as if it were on fire, he put a little snow in his mouth and sucked it; this for a moment assuaged his thirst, but changed it into fever—a relief which was an aggravation.

The storm had become shapeless from its violence. Deluges of snow are possible. This was one. The paroxysm scourged the shore at the same time that it up-tore the depths of ocean. This was, perhaps, the moment when the distracted hooker was going to pieces in the battle of the breakers.

He traveled under this north wind, still towards the east, over wide surfaces of snow. He knew not how the hours had passed. For a long time he had ceased to see the smoke. Such indications are soon effaced

in the night; besides, it was past the hour when fires are put out. Or he had, perhaps, made a mistake, and it was possible that neither town nor village existed in the direction in which he was traveling. Doubting, he yet persevered.

Two or three times the little infant cried. Then he adopted in his gait a rocking movement, and the child was soothed and silenced. She ended by falling into a sound sleep. Shivering himself, he felt her warm. He frequently tightened the folds of the jacket round the babe's neck, so that the frost should not get in through any opening, and that no melted snow should drop between the garment and the child.

The plain was unequal. In the declivities into which it sloped, the snow, driven by the wind into the dips of the ground, was so deep, in comparison with a child so small, that it almost engulfed him, and he had to struggle through it, half buried. He walked on, working away the snow with his knees.

Having cleared the ravine, he reached the high lands swept by the winds, where the snow lay thin. Then he found the surface a sheet of ice. The little girl's lukewarm breath, playing on his face, warmed it for a moment, then lingered, and froze in his hair, stiffening it into icicles.

He felt the approach of another danger. He could not afford to fall. He knew that if he did so, he should never rise again. He was overcome by fatigue, and the weight of the darkness would, as with the dead woman, have held him to the ground, and the ice glued him alive to the earth.

He had tripped upon the slopes of precipices, and had recovered himself; he had stumbled into holes, and had got out again. Thenceforward the slightest fall would be death; a false step opened for him a tomb. He must not slip. He had not strength to rise even to his knees. Now everything was slippery; everywhere there was rime and frozen snow. The little creature whom he carried made his progress fearfully difficult. She was not only a burden, which his weariness and exhaustion made excessive, but was also an embarrassment. She occupied both his arms; and, to him who walks over ice, both arms are a natural and necessary balancing-pole.

He was obliged to do without this balance-pole.

He did without it and advanced, bending under his burden, not knowing what would become of him.

This little infant was the drop causing the cup of distress to overflow.

He advanced, reeling at every step, as if on a spring-board, and accomplishing, without spectators, miracles of equilibrium. Let us

repeat that he was, perhaps, followed on this path of pain by eyes unsleeping in the distances of the shadows—the eyes of the mother and the eyes of God. He staggered, slipped, recovered himself, took care of the infant, and, gathering the jacket about her, he covered up her head; staggered again, advanced—slipped—then drew himself up. The cowardly wind drove against him. Apparently, he made much more way than was necessary. He was, to all appearance, on the plains where Bincleaves Farm was afterwards established, between what are now



called Spring Gardens and the Parsonage House. Homesteads and cottages occupy the place of waste lands. Sometimes less than a century separates a steppe from a city.

Suddenly, a lull having occurred in the icy blast which was blinding him, he perceived, at a short distance in front of him, a cluster of gables and of chimneys shown in relief by the snow. The reverse of a silhouette—a city painted in white on a black horizon, something like what we call nowadays a negative proof. Roofs—dwellings—shelter! He had arrived somewhere at last. He felt the ineffable encouragement of hope. The watch of a ship which has wandered from her course, feels some such emotion when he cries, "Land ho!"

He hurried his steps.

At length, then, he was near mankind. He would soon be amidst living creatures. There was no longer anything to fear. There glowed within him that sudden warmth—security; that out of which he was emerging was over; thenceforward there would no longer be night, nor winter, nor tempest. It seemed to him that he had left all evil chances behind him. The infant was no longer a burden. He almost ran.

His eyes were fixed on the roofs. There was life there. He never took his eyes off them. A dead man might gaze thus on what might appear through the half-opened lid of his sepulchre. There were the chimneys of which he had seen the smoke.

No smoke arose from them now. He was not long before he reached the houses. He came to the outskirts of a town—an open street. At that period bars to streets were falling into disuse.

The street began by two houses. In those two houses neither candle nor lamp was to be seen; nor in the whole street; nor in the whole town, so far as eye could reach. The house to the right was a roof rather than a house—nothing could be more mean. The walls were of mud, the roof was of straw, and there was more thatch than wall. A large nettle, springing from the bottom of the wall, reached the roof. The hovel had but one door, which was like that of a dog-kennel; and a window, which was but a hole. All was shut up. At the side an inhabited pig-sty told that the house was also inhabited.

The house on the left was large, high, built entirely of stone, with a slated roof. It was also closed. It was the rich man's home, opposite to that of the pauper.

The boy did not hesitate. He approached the great mansion. The double folding-door of massive oak, studded with large nails, was of the kind that leads one to expect that behind it there is a stout armory of bolts and locks. An iron knocker was attached to it. He raised the knocker with some difficulty, for his benumbed hands were stumps rather than hands. He knocked once.

No answer.

He struck again; and two knocks.

No movement was heard in the house.

He knocked a third time.

There was no sound. He saw that they were all asleep, and did not care to get up.

Then he turned to the hovel. He picked up a pebble from the snow, and knocked against the low door.

There was no answer.

He raised himself on tiptoe, and knocked with his pebble against the pane too softly to break the glass, but loud enough to be heard.

No voice was heard; no step moved; no candle was lighted.

He saw that there, as well, they did not care to awake.

The house of stone and the thatched hovel were equally deaf to the wretched.

The boy decided on pushing on farther, and penetrating the strait of houses which stretched away in front of him, so dark that it seemed more like a gulf between two cliffs than the entrance to a town.



CHAPTER IV

ANOTHER KIND OF DESERT

IT was Weymouth which he had just entered. Weymouth then was not the respectable and fine Weymouth of to-day. Ancient Weymouth did not present, like the present one, an irreproachable rectangular quay, with an inn and a statue in honor of George III. This resulted from the fact that George III. had not yet been born. For the same reason, they had not yet designed on the slope of the green hill towards the east, fashioned flat on the soil by cutting away the turf and leaving the bare chalk to the view, the *White Horse*, an acre long, bearing the king upon his back, and always turning, in honor of George III., his tail to the city. These honors, however, were deserved. George III., having lost in his old age the intellect he had never possessed in his youth, was not responsible for the calamities of his reign. He was an innocent. Why not erect statues to him?

Weymouth, a hundred and eighty years ago, was about as symmetrical as a game of spillikins in confusion. In legends it is said that Astaroth traveled over the world, carrying on her back a wallet which contained everything, even good women in their houses. A pell-mell of sheds thrown from her devil's bag would give an idea of that irregular Weymouth—the good women in the sheds included. The Music Hall remains as a specimen of those buildings; a confusion of wooden dens, carved, and eaten by worms (which carve in another fashion)—shapeless, overhanging buildings, some with pillars, leaning one against the other for support against the sea wind and leaving between them awkward spaces of narrow and winding channels, lanes, and passages, often flooded by the equinoctial tides. A heap of old grandmother houses, crowded round a grandfather church, such was Weymouth; a sort of old Norman village thrown up on the coast of England.

The traveler who entered the tavern, now replaced by the hotel, instead of paying royally his twenty-five francs for a fried sole and a bottle of wine, had to suffer the humiliation of eating a pennyworth of soup made of fish,—which soup, by the bye, was very good. Wretched fare!

The deserted child, carrying the foundling, passed through the first street, then the second, then the third. He raised his eyes, seeking in the higher stories and in the roofs a lighted window-pane, but all were closed and dark. At intervals he knocked at the doors. No one answered. Nothing makes the heart so like a stone as being warm between sheets. The noise and the shaking had at length awakened the infant. He knew this because he felt her suck his cheek. She did not cry, believing him her mother.

He was about to turn and wander long, perhaps, in the intersections of the Scrambridge lanes, where there were then more cultivated plots than dwellings, more thorn hedges than houses; but fortunately he struck into a passage which exists to this day near Trinity schools. This passage led him to a water-brink, where there was a roughly built quay with a parapet, and to the right he made out a bridge. It was the bridge over the Wey, connecting Weymouth with Melcombe Regis, and under the arches of which the Backwater joins the harbor.

Weymouth, a hamlet, was then the suburb of Melcombe Regis, a city and port. Now Melcombe Regis is a parish of Weymouth. The village has absorbed the city. It was the bridge which did the work. Bridges are strange vehicles of suction, which inhale the population, and sometimes swell one river-bank at the expense of its opposite neighbor.

The boy went to the bridge, which at that period was a covered timber structure. He crossed it. Thanks to its roofing, there was no snow on the planks. His bare feet had a moment's comfort as they crossed them. Having passed over the bridge, he was in Melcombe Regis. There were fewer wooden houses than stone ones, there. He was no longer in the village, he was in the city.

The bridge opened on a rather fine street called St. Thomas's Street. He e[illegible]it. Here and there were high carved gables and shop-fronts. H[illegible]ocking at the doors again: he had no strength left to call or [illegible]

At Melcombe Regis, as at Weymouth, no one was stirring. The doors were all carefully double-locked. The windows were covered by their shutters, as the eyes by their lids. Every precaution had been taken to avoid being aroused by disagreeable surprises. The little wanderer was suffering the indefinable depression made by a sleeping town. Its silence, as of a paralyzed ants' nest, makes the head swim. All its

lethargies mingle their nightmares, its slumbers are a crowd, and from its human bodies lying prone, there arises a vapor of dreams. Sleep has gloomy associates beyond this life: the decomposed thoughts of the sleepers float above them in a mist which is both of death and of life, and combine with the Possible, which has also, perhaps, the power of thought, as it floats in space. Hence arise entanglements. Dreams, those clouds, interpose their folds and their transparencies over that star, the mind. Above those closed eyelids, where vision has taken the place of sight, a sepulchral disintegration of outlines and appearances dilates itself into impalpability. Mysterious, diffused existences amalgamate themselves with life on that border of death, which sleep is. Those larvæ and souls mingle in the air. Even he who sleeps not, feels a medium press upon him full of sinister life. The surrounding chimera, in which he suspects a reality, impedes him. The waking man, wending his way amidst the sleep phantoms of others, unconsciously pushes back passing shadows, has, or imagines that he has, a vague fear of adverse contact with the invisible, and feels at every moment the obscure pressure of a hostile encounter which immediately dissolves. There is something of the effect of a forest in the nocturnal diffusion of dreams.

This is what is called being afraid without reason.

What a man feels, a child feels still more.

The uneasiness of nocturnal fear, increased by the spectral houses, increased the weight of the sad burden under which he was struggling.

He entered Conyear Lane, and perceived at the end of that passage the Backwater, which he took for the ocean. He no longer knew in what direction the sea lay. He retraced his steps, struck to the left by Maiden Street, and returned as far as St. Alban's Row.

There by chance and without selection, he knocked violently at any house that he happened to pass. His blows, on which he was expending his last energies, were jerky and without aim; now ceasing altogether for a time, now renewed as if in irritation. It was the violence of his fever striking against the doors.

One voice answered.

That of Time.

Three o'clock tolled slowly behind him from the old belfry of St. Nicholas'.

Then all sank into silence again.

That no inhabitant should have opened a lattice may appear surprising. Nevertheless that silence is in a great measure to be explained. We must remember that in January, 1790, they were just over a somewhat severe outbreak of the plague in London, and that the fear of receiving sick vagabonds caused a diminution of hospitality every-

where. People would not even open their windows for fear of inhaling the poison.

The child felt the coldness of men more terrible than the coldness of night. The coldness of men is intentional. He felt a tightening on his sinking heart which he had not known on the open plains. Now he had entered into the midst of life, and remained alone. This was the summit of misery. The pitiless desert he had understood; the unrelenting town was too much to bear.

The hour, the strokes of which he had just counted, had been another blow. Nothing is so freezing in certain situations as the voice of the hour. It is a declaration of indifference. It is Eternity saying, "What does it matter to me?"

He stopped, and it is not certain that, in that miserable minute, he did not ask himself whether it would not be easier to lie down there and die. However, the little infant leaned her head against his shoulder, and fell asleep again.

This blind confidence set him onwards again. He whom all supports were failing felt that he was himself a basis of support. Irresistible summons of duty!

Neither such ideas nor such a situation belonged to his age. It is probable that he did not understand them. It was a matter of instinct. He did what he chanced to do.

He set out again in the direction of Johnstone Row. But now he no longer walked; he dragged himself along. He left St. Mary's Street to the left, made zigzags through lanes, and at the end of a winding passage found himself in a rather wide, open space. It was a piece of waste land not built upon; probably the spot where Chesterfield Place now stands. The houses ended there. He perceived the sea to the right, and scarcely anything more of the town to his left.

What was to become of him? Here was the country again. To the east great inclined planes of snow marked out the wide slopes of Radipole. Should he continue this journey? Should he advance and re-enter the solitudes? Should he return and re-enter the streets? What was he to do between those two silences—the mute plain and the deaf city? Which of the two refusals should he choose?

There is the anchor of mercy. There is also the look of piteousness. It was that look which the poor little despairing wanderer threw around him.

All at once he heard a menace.

CHAPTER V

MISANTHROPY PLAYS ITS PRANKS



STRANGE and alarming grinding of teeth reached him through the darkness.

It was enough to drive one back: he advanced. To those to whom silence has become dreadful, a howl is comforting.

That fierce growl re-assured him—that threat was a promise. There was there a being alive and awake, though it might be a wild beast. He advanced in the direction whence came the snarl.

He turned the corner of a wall, and, behind, in the vast sepulchral light made by the reflection of snow and sea, he saw a thing placed as if for shelter. It was a cart, unless it was a hovel. It had wheels,—it was a carriage. It had a roof,—it was a dwelling. From the roof arose a funnel, and out of the funnel smoke. This smoke was red, and seemed to imply a good fire in the interior. Behind, projecting hinges indicated a door, and in the centre of this door a square opening showed a light inside the caravan.

He approached.

Whatever had growled perceived his approach, and became furious. It was no longer a growl which he had to meet, it was a roar. He heard a sharp sound, as of a chain violently pulled to its full length, and suddenly, under the door, between the hind wheels, two rows of sharp white teeth appeared. At the same time as the mouth between the wheels, a head was put through the window.

"Peace there!" said the head.

The mouth was silent.

The head began again:

"Is any one there?"

The child answered:

"Yes."
"Who?"
"I."
"You? Who are you? whence do you come?"



"I am weary," said the child.
"What o'clock is it?"
"I am cold."
"What are you doing there?"
"I am hungry."
The head replied:

"Every one cannot be as happy as a lord. Go away."

The head was withdrawn and the window closed.

The child bowed his forehead, drew the sleeping infant closer in his arms, and collected his strength to resume his journey; he had taken a few steps, and was hurrying away.

However, at the same time that the window closed the door had opened; a step had been let down, the voice which had spoken to the child cried out angrily from the inside of the van:

"Well! why do you not enter?"

The child turned back.

"Come in," resumed the voice. "Who has sent me a fellow like this, who is hungry and cold, and who does not come in?"

The child, at once repulsed and invited, remained motionless.

The voice continued:

"You are told to come in, you young rascal."

He made up his mind, and placed one foot on the lowest step.

There was a great growl under the van. He drew back. The gaping jaws appeared.

"Peace!" cried the voice of the man.

The jaws retreated, the growling ceased.

"Come up!" continued the man.

The child with difficulty climbed up the three steps. He was impeded by the infant so benumbed, rolled up and enveloped in the jacket that nothing could be distinguished of her, and that she was but a little shapeless mass.

He passed over the three steps; and having reached the threshold, stopped.

No candle was burning in the caravan, probably from the economy of want. The hut was lighted only by a red tinge, arising from the opening at the top of the stove, in which sparkled a peat fire. On the stove was smoking a porringer and a saucepan, containing to all appearance something to eat. The savory odor was perceptible. The hut was furnished with a chest, a stool, and an unlighted lantern which hung from the ceiling. Besides, to the partition were attached some boards on brackets and some hooks, from which hung a variety of things. On the boards, and nails, were rows of glasses, coppers, an alembic, a vessel rather like those used for graining wax, which are called granulators, and a confusion of strange objects of which the child understood nothing, and which were utensils for cooking and chemistry. The caravan was oblong in shape, the stove being in front. It was not even a little room; it was scarcely a big box. There was more light outside from the snow than inside from the stove. Everything in the

caravan was indistinct and misty. Nevertheless, a reflection of the fire on the ceiling enabled the spectator to read in large letters:

URSUS, PHILOSOPHER.

The child, in fact, was entering the house of Homo and Ursus. The one he had just heard growling, the other speaking.

The child having reached the threshold, perceived near the stove a man, tall, smooth, thin, and old, dressed in gray, whose head, as he stood, reached the roof. The man could not have raised himself on tiptoe. The caravan was just his size.

"Come in!" said the man, who was Ursus.

The child entered.

"Put down your bundle."

The child placed his burden carefully on the top of the chest, for fear of awakening and terrifying it.

The man continued:

"How gently you put it down! You could not be more careful were it a case of relics. Is it that you are afraid of tearing a hole in your rags? Worthless vagabond! in the streets at this hour! Who are you? Answer! But no. I forbid you to answer. There! You are cold. Warm yourself as quick as you can," and he shoved him by the shoulders in front of the fire.

"How wet you are! You're frozen through! A nice state to come into a house! Come, take off those rags, you villain!" and as with one hand, and with feverish haste, he dragged off the boy's rags, which tore into shreds, with the other he took down from a nail a man's shirt, and one of those knitted jackets which are up to this day called kiss-me-quicks.

"Here are clothes."

He chose out of a heap a woolen rag, and chafed before the fire the limb of the exhausted and bewildered child, who at that moment, warm and naked, felt as if he were seeing and touching heaven. The limbs having been rubbed, he next wiped the boy's feet.

"Come, you limb! you have nothing frost-bitten. I was a fool to fancy you had something frozen, hind-legs or fore-paws. You will not lose the use of them this time. Dress yourself!"

The child put on the shirt, and the man slipped the knitted jacket over it.

"Now. . . . ."

The man kicked the stool forward and made the little boy sit down, again shoving him by the shoulders; then he pointed with his finger to

the porringer which was smoking upon the stove. What the child saw in the porringer was again heaven to him—namely, a potato and a bit of bacon.

"You are hungry—eat!"

The man took from the shelf a crust of hard bread and an iron fork, and handed them to the child.

The boy hesitated.

"Perhaps you expect me to lay the cloth," said the man, and he placed the porringer on the child's lap.

"Gobble that up."

Hunger overcame astonishment. The child began to eat. The poor boy devoured rather than ate. The glad sound of the crunching of bread filled the hut. The man grumbled:

"Not so quick, you horrid glutton! Isn't he a greedy scoundrel? When such scum are hungry, they eat in a revolting fashion. You should see a lord sup. In my time, I have seen dukes eat. They don't eat; that's noble. They drink, however. Come, you pig! stuff yourself!"

The absence of ears, which is the concomitant of a hungry stomach, caused the child to take little heed of these violent epithets, tempered as they were by charity of action involving a contradiction resulting in his benefit. For the moment he was absorbed by two exigencies and by two ecstasies—food and warmth.

Ursus continued his imprecations, muttering to himself:

"I have seen King James supping *in propriâ personâ*, in the Banqueting House, where are to be admired the paintings of the famous Rubens. His Majesty touched nothing. This beggar here, browses—browses, a word derived from brute. What put it into my head to come to this Weymouth seven times devoted to the infernal deities? I have sold nothing since morning. I have harangued the snow. I have played the flute to the hurricane. I have not pocketed a farthing; and now, to-night, beggars drop in. Horrid place! There is battle, struggle, competition between the fools in the street and myself. They try to give me nothing but farthings. I try to give them nothing but drugs. Well! to-day I've made nothing. Not an idiot on the highway. Not a penny in the till. Eat away! Hell-born boy! Tear and crunch! We have fallen on times when nothing can equal the cynicism of spungers. Fatten at my expense, parasite! This wretched boy is more than hungry; he is mad. It is not appetite, it is ferocity. He is carried away by a rabid virus. Perhaps he has the plague. Have you the plague, you thief? Suppose he were to give it to Homo! No, never! Let the populace die, but not my wolf. But, by the bye, I am hungry myself.

I declare that this is all very disagreeable. I have worked far into the night. There are seasons in a man's life when he is hard pressed. I was to-night, by hunger. I was alone. I made a fire. I had but one potato, one crust of bread, a mouthful of bacon, and a drop of milk, and I put it to warm. I said to myself, 'good.' I think I am going to eat, and bang! this crocodile falls upon me at the very moment. He installs himself clean between my food and myself. Behold! how my larder is devastated! Eat! pike, eat! You shark! how many teeth have you in your jaws? Guzzle, wolf-cub; no, I withdraw that word. I respect wolves. Swallow up my food, boa. I have worked all day, and far into the night, on an empty stomach; my throat is sore; my pancreas in distress; my entrails torn; and my reward is to see another eat. 'Tis all one, though! We will divide. He shall have the bread, the potato, and the bacon, but I will have the milk."

Just then a wail, touching and prolonged, arose in the hut. The man listened.

"You cry! sycophant! Why do you cry?"

The boy turned towards him; it was evident that it was not he who cried. He had his mouth full.

The cry continued.

The man went to the chest.

"So it is your bundle that wails! Vale of Jehoshaphat! Behold a vociferating parcel! What the devil has your bundle got to croak about?"

He unrolled the jacket, an infant's head appeared, the mouth open and crying.

"Well! Who goes there?" said the man. "Here is another of them. When is this to end? Who is there? To arms! corporal! call out the guard; another bang! What have you brought me, thief? Don't you see it is thirsty?

"Come! the little one must have a drink. So now I shall not have even the milk!"

He took down from the things lying in disorder on the shelf a bandage of linen, a sponge, and a phial, muttering savagely:

"What an infernal place!"

Then he looked at the little infant.

"'Tis is a girl! one can tell that by her scream, and she is drenched as well."

He dragged away, as he had done from the boy, the tatters in which she was knotted up rather than dressed, and swathed her in a rag, which, though of coarse linen, was clean and dry. This rough and sudden dressing made the infant angry.

"She mews relentlessly," said he.

He bit off a long piece of sponge, tore from the roll a square piece of linen, drew from it a bit of thread, took the saucepan containing the milk from the stove, filled the phial with milk, drove down the sponge half-way into its neck, covered the sponge with linen, tied this cork in with the thread, applied his cheeks to the phial to be sure that it was not too hot, and seized under his left arm the bewildered bundle, which was still crying. "Come! take your supper, creature! Let me suckle you," and he put the neck of the bottle to its mouth.

The little infant drank greedily.

He held the phial at the necessary incline, grumbling:

"They are all the same, the cowards! When they have all they want they are silent."

The child had drank so ravenously, and had seized so eagerly this breast offered by a cross-grained Providence, that she was taken with a fit of coughing.

"You are going to choke!" growled Ursus. "A fine gobbler this one, too!"

He drew away the sponge which she was sucking, allowed the cough to subside, and then replaced the phial to her lips, saying:

"Suck! you little wretch!"

In the meantime the boy had laid down his fork. Seeing the infant drink had made him forget to eat. The moment before, while he ate, the expression in his face was satisfaction—now it was gratitude. He watched the infant's renewal of life; the completion of the resurrection begun by himself filled his eyes with an ineffable brilliancy. Ursus went on muttering angry words between his teeth. The little boy now and then lifted towards Ursus his eyes moist with the unspeakable emotion which the poor little being felt, but was unable to express. Ursus addressed him furiously:

"Well, will you eat?"

"And you?" said the child, trembling all over, and with tears in his eyes. "You will have nothing!"

"Will you be kind enough to eat it all up, you cub! There is not too much for you, since there was not enough for me."

The child took up his fork, but did not eat.

"Eat," shouted Ursus. "What has it got to do with me? Who speaks of me? Wretched little barefooted clerk of Penniless Parish, I tell you, eat it all up. You are here to eat, drink, and sleep—eat, or I will kick you out, both of you."

The boy, under this menace, began to eat again. He had not much trouble in finishing what was left in the porringer. Ursus muttered:

"This building is badly joined. The cold comes in by the window pane."

A pane had indeed been broken in front, either by a jolt of the caravan or by a stone thrown by some mischievous boy. Ursus had placed a star of paper over the fracture, which had become unpasted. The blast entered there.



He was half seated on the chest. The infant in his arms, and at the same time on his lap, was sucking rapturously at the bottle, in the happy somnolency of cherubim before their Creator, and infants at their mothers' breast.

"She is drunk," said Ursus; and he continued, "After this, preach sermons on temperance!"

The wind tore from the pane the plaster of paper, which flew across the hut; but this was nothing to the children who were entering life anew; whilst the little girl drank, and the little boy ate, Ursus grumbled:

"Drunkenness begins in the infant in swaddling clothes. What useful trouble Bishop Tillotson gives himself, thundering against excessive drinking. What an odious draught of wind! And then my stove is old. It allows puffs of smoke to escape enough to give you trichiasis. One has the inconvenience of cold, and the inconvenience of fire. One cannot see clearly. That being over there abuses my hospitality. Well! I have not been able to distinguish the animal's face yet. Comfort is wanting here. By Jove! I am a great admirer of exquisite banquets in well closed rooms. I have missed my vocation. I was born to be a sensualist. The greatest of stoics was Philoxenus, who wished to possess the neck of a crane, so as to be longer in tasting the pleasures of the table. Receipts to-day, naught. Nothing sold all day. Inhabitants, servants, and tradesmen, here is the doctor, here are the drugs. You are losing your time, old friend. Pack up your physic. Every one is well down here. It's a cursed town, where every one is well! The skies alone have diarrhœa—what snow! Anaxagoras taught that the snow was black; and he was right, cold being blackness. Ice is night. What a hurricane! I can fancy the delight of those at sea. The hurricane is the passage of demons. It is the row of the tempest fiends galloping and rolling head over heels above our bone-boxes. In the cloud this one has a tail, that one has horns, another a flame for a tongue, another claws to its wings, another a lord chancellor's paunch, another an academician's pate. You may observe a form in every sound. To every fresh wind a fresh demon. The ear hears, the eye sees, the crash is a face. Zounds! There are folks at sea—that is certain. My friends! get through the storm as best you can. I have enough to do to get through life. Come now, do I keep an inn, or do I not? Why should I trade with these travelers. The universal distress sends its spatterings even as far as my poverty. Into my cabin fall hideous drops of the far-spreading mud of mankind. I am given up to the voracity of travelers. I am a prey—the prey of those dying of hunger. Winter, night, a pasteboard hut, an unfortunate friend below and without, the storm, a potato, a fire as big as my fist, parasites, the wind penetrating through every cranny, not a half-penny, and bundles which set to howling. I open them and find beggars inside. Is this fair? Besides, the laws are violated. Ah! vagabond with your vagabond child! Mischievous pick-pocket, evil-minded abortion, so you walk the streets after curfew? If our good king only knew it, would he not have you thrown into the bottom of a ditch, just to teach you better! My gentleman walks out at night with my lady, and with the glass at fifteen degrees of frost, bare-headed and bare-footed. Understand that such things are forbidden. There are rules and regulations,

you lawless wretches. Vagabonds are punished, honest folks who have houses are guarded and protected. Kings are the fathers of their people. I have my own house. You would have been whipped in the public street had you chanced to have been met, and quite right, too. There must be order in an established city. For my own part, I did wrong not to denounce you to the constable. But I am such a fool! I understand what is right and do what is wrong. Oh, the ruffian! to come here in such a state! I did not see the snow upon them when they came in; it had melted, and here's my whole house swamped. I have an inundation in my home. I shall have to burn an incredible amount of coals to dry up this lake—coals at twelve farthings, the miners' standard! How am I going to manage to fit three into this caravan? Now it is over; I enter the nursery; I am going to have in my house the weaning of the future beggardom of England. I shall have for employment, office, and function, to fashion the miscarried fortunes of that colossal Prostitute, Misery, to bring to perfection future gallows' birds, and to give young thieves the forms of philosophy. The tongue of the wolf is the warning of God. And to think that if I had not been eaten up by creatures of this kind for the last thirty years, I should be rich; Homo would be fat; I should have a medicine-chest full of rarities; as many surgical instruments as Doctor Linacre, surgeon to King Henry VIII.; divers animals of all kinds; Egyptian mummies, and similar curiosities; I should be a member of the College of Physicians, and have the right of using the library, built in 1652 by the celebrated Hervey, and of studying in the lantern of that dome whence you can see the whole of London. I could continue my observations of solar obfuscation, and prove that a caliginous vapor arises from the planet. Such was the opinion of John Kepler, who was born the year before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and who was mathematician to the emperor. The sun is a chimney which sometimes smokes; so does my stove. My stove is no better than the sun. Yes, I should have made my fortune: my part would have been a different one—I should not be the insignificant fellow I am. I should not degrade science in the highways, for the crowd is not worthy of the doctrine, the crowd being nothing better than a confused mixture of all sorts of ages, sexes, humors, and conditions, that wise men of all periods have not hesitated to despise, and whose extravagance and passion the most moderate men in their justice detest. Oh, I am weary of existence! After all, one does not live long! This human life is soon done with. But, no—it is long. At intervals, that we should not become too discouraged, that we may have the stupidity to consent to bear our being, and not profit by the magnificent opportunities to hang ourselves which cords and nails afford, nature

puts on an air of taking a little care of man—not to-night, though. The rogue causes the wheat to spring up, ripens the grape, gives her song to the nightingale. From time to time a ray of morning or a glass of gin, and that is what we call happiness! It is a narrow border of good round a huge winding-sheet of evil. We have a destiny of which the devil has woven the stuff, and God has sewn the hem. In the meantime, you have eaten my supper, you thief!"

In the meantime the infant, whom he was holding all the time in his arms very tenderly whilst he was vituperating, shut its eyes languidly; a sign of repletion. Ursus examined the phial, and grumbled:

"She has drunk it all up, the impudent creature!"

He arose, and sustaining the infant with his left arm, with his right he raised the lid of the chest and drew from beneath it a bear-skin, the one he called, as will be remembered, his real skin. Whilst he was doing this he heard the other child eating, and looked at him sideways.

"It will be something to do if, henceforth, I have to feed that growing glutton. It will be a worm gnawing at the vitals of my industry."

He spread out, still with one arm, the bear-skin on the chest, working his elbow and managing his movements so as not to disturb the sleep into which the infant was just sinking.

Then he laid her down on the fur, on the side next the fire. Having done so, he placed the phial on the stove, and exclaimed:

"I'm thirsty, if you like!"

He looked into the pot. There were a few good mouthfuls of milk left in it; he raised it to his lips. Just as he was about to drink, his eye fell on the little girl. He replaced the pot on the stove, took the phial, uncorked it, poured into it all the milk that remained, which was just sufficient to fill it, replaced the sponge and the linen rag over it, and tied it round the neck of the bottle.

"All the same, I'm hungry and thirsty," he observed.

And he added:

"When one cannot eat bread, one must drink water."

Behind the stove there was a jug with the spout off. He took it and handed it to the boy.

"Will you drink?"

The child drank, and then went on eating.

Ursus seized the pitcher again, and conveyed it to his mouth. The temperature of the water which it contained had been unequally modified by the proximity of the stove.

He swallowed some mouthfuls and made a grimace.

"Water! pretending to be pure, thou resemblest false friends. Thou art warm at the top and cold at bottom."

In the meantime the boy had finished his supper. The porringer was more than empty, it was cleaned out. He picked up and ate pensively a few crumbs caught in the folds of the knitted jacket on his lap.

Ursus turned towards him.

"That is not all. Now, a word with you. The mouth is not made only for eating, it is made for speaking. Now that you are warmed and stuffed, you beast, take care of yourself. You are going to answer my questions. Whence do you come?"

The child replied:

"I do not know."

"How do you mean, you don't know?"

"I was abandoned this evening on the sea-shore."

"You little scamp! what's your name? He is so good for nothing that his relations desert him."

"I have no relations."

"Give in a little to my tastes, and observe that I do not like those who sing to a tune of fibs. Thou must have relatives since you have a sister."

"It is not my sister."

"It is not your sister?"

"No."

"Who is it then?"

"It is a baby that I found."

"Found?"

"Yes."

"What! did you pick her up?"

"Yes."

"Where? If you lie I will exterminate you."

"On the breast of a woman who was dead in the snow."

"When?"

"An hour ago."

"Where?"

"A league from here."

The arched brow of Ursus knitted and took that pointed shape which characterizes emotion on the brow of a philosopher.

"Dead! Lucky for her! We must leave her in the snow. She is well off there. In which direction?"

"In the direction of the sea."

"Did you cross the bridge?"

"Yes."

Ursus opened the window at the back and examined the view.

The weather had not improved. The snow was falling thickly and mournfully.

He shut the window.

He went to the broken glass; he filled the hole with a rag; he heaped the stove with peat; he spread out as far as he could the bear-skin on the chest; took a large book which he had in a corner, placed it under the skin for a pillow, and laid the head of the sleeping infant on it.

Then he turned to the boy.

"Lie down there."

The boy obeyed, and stretched himself at full length by the side of the infant.

Ursus rolled the bear-skin over the two children, and tucked it under their feet.

He took down from a shelf, and tied round his waist, a linen belt with a large pocket containing, no doubt, a case of instruments and bottles of restoratives.

Then he took the lantern from where it hung to the ceiling and lighted it. It was a dark lantern. When lighted it still left the children in shadow.

Ursus half opened the door, and said:

"I am going out; do not be afraid. I shall return. Go to sleep."

Then letting down the steps, he called Homo. He was answered by a loving growl.

Ursus, holding the lantern in his hand, descended. The steps were replaced, the door was reclosed. The children remained alone.

From without, a voice, the voice of Ursus, said:

"You, boy, who have just eaten up my supper, are you already asleep?"

"No," replied the child.

"Well, if she cries, give her the rest of the milk."

The clinking of a chain being undone was heard, and the sound of a man's footsteps, mingled with that of the pads of an animal, died off in the distance. A few minutes after, both children slept profoundly.

The little boy and girl, lying naked side by side, were joined through the silent hours, in the seraphic promiscuousness of the shadows; such dreams as were possible to their age floated from one to the other; beneath their closed eyelids there shone, perhaps, a starlight; if the word marriage were not inappropriate to the situation, they were husband and wife after the fashion of the angels. Such innocence in such darkness, such purity in such an embrace, such foretastes of heaven

are possible only to childhood, and no immensity approaches the greatness of little children. Of all gulfs this is the deepest. The fearful perpetuity of the dead chained beyond life, the mighty animosity of the ocean to a wreck, the whiteness of the snow over buried bodies, do not equal in pathos two children's mouths meeting divinely in sleep, and the meeting of which is not even a kiss. A betrothal perchance, perchance a catastrophe. The unknown weighs down upon their juxtaposition. It charms, it terrifies; who knows which? It stays the pulse. Innocence is higher than virtue. Innocence is holy ignorance. They slept. They were in peace. They were warm. The nakedness of their bodies, embraced each in each, amalgamated with the virginity of their souls. They were there as in the nest of the abyss.

CHAPTER VI

THE AWAKING

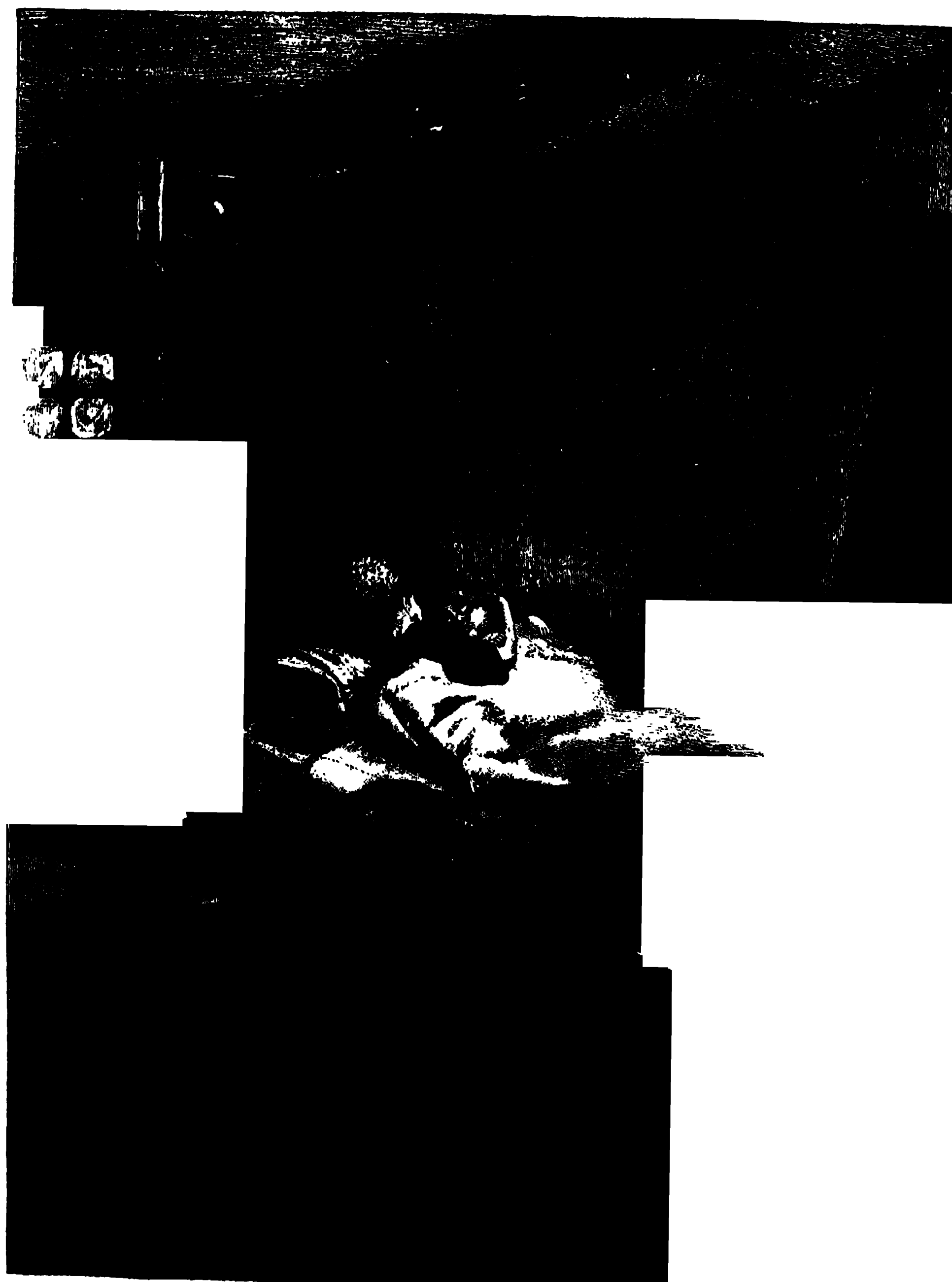
THE beginning of day is sinister. A sad pale light penetrated the hut. It was the frozen dawn. That wan light which throws into relief the mournful reality of objects which are blurred into spectral forms by the night, did not awake the children, so soundly were they sleeping. The caravan was warm. Their breathings alternated like two peaceful waves. There was no longer a hurricane without. The light of dawn was slowly taking possession of the horizon. The constellations were being extinguished, like candles blown out one after the other. Only a few large stars resisted. The deep-toned song of the Infinite was coming from the sea.

The fire in the stove was not quite out. The twilight broke, little by little, into daylight. The boy slept less heavily than the girl. At length, a ray brighter than the others broke through the pane, and he opened his eyes. The sleep of childhood ends in forgetfulness. He lay in a state of semi-stupor, without knowing where he was or what was near him, without making an effort to remember, gazing at the ceiling, and setting himself an aimless task as he gazed dreamily at the letters of the inscription—*Ursus, Philosopher*—which, being unable to read, he examined without the power of deciphering.

The sound of a key turning in the lock caused him to turn his head.

The door turned on its hinges, the steps were let down. Ursus was returning. He ascended the steps, his extinguished lantern in his hand. At the same time the pattering of four paws fell upon the steps. It was Homo, following Ursus, who had also returned to his home.

The boy awoke with somewhat of a start. The wolf, having probably an appetite, gave him a morning yawn, showing two rows of very white teeth. He stopped when he had got half-way up the steps, and placed both forepaws within the caravan, leaning on the threshold, like



THE SLEEP OF CHILDHOOD.

a preacher with his elbows on the edge of the pulpit. He sniffed the chest from afar, not being in the habit of finding it occupied as it then was. His wolfine form, framed by the doorway, was designed in black against the light of morning. He made up his mind, and entered. The boy, seeing the wolf in the caravan, got out of the bear-skin, and, standing up, placed himself in front of the little infant, who was sleeping more soundly than ever.

Ursus had just hung the lantern up on a nail in the ceiling. Silently, and with mechanical deliberation, he unbuckled the belt in which was his case, and replaced it on the shelf. He looked at nothing, and seemed to see nothing. His eyes were glassy. Something was moving him deeply in his mind. His thoughts at length found breath, as usual, in a rapid outflow of words. He exclaimed:

"Happy, doubtless! Dead! stone dead!"

He bent down, and put a shovelful of turf mould into the stove; and as he poked the peat, he growled out:

"I had a deal of trouble to find her. The mischief of the unknown had buried her under two feet of snow. Had it not been for Homo, who sees as clearly with his nose as Christopher Columbus did with his mind, I should be still there, scratching at the avalanche, and playing hide and seek with Death. Diogenes took his lantern and sought for a man; I took my lantern and sought for a woman. He found a sarcasm, and I found mourning. How cold she was. I touched her hand—a stone! What silence in her eyes. How can any one be such a fool as to die and leave a child behind! It will not be convenient to pack three into this box. A pretty family I have now! A boy and a girl!"

Whilst Ursus was speaking, Homo sidled up close to the stove. The hand of the sleeping infant was hanging down between the stove and the chest. The wolf set to licking it. He licked it so softly that he did not awake the little infant.

Ursus turned round.

"Well done, Homo. I shall be father, and you shall be uncle."

Then he betook himself again to arranging the fire with philosophical care, without interrupting his aside.

"Adoption! It is settled; Homo is willing."

He drew himself up.

"I should like to know who is responsible for that woman's death? Is it man? or . . . . ."

He raised his eyes, but looked beyond the ceiling, and his lips murmured:

"Is it Thou?"

Then his brow dropped, as if under a burden, and he continued:

"The night took the trouble to kill the woman."

Raising his eyes, they met those of the boy, just awakened, who was listening. Ursus addressed him abruptly:

"What are you laughing about?"

The boy answered:

"I am not laughing."

Ursus felt a kind of shock, looked at him fixedly for a few minutes and said:

"Then you are frightful."

The interior of the caravan, on the previous night, had been so dark that Ursus had not yet seen the boy's face. The broad daylight revealed it. He placed the palms of his hands on the two shoulders of the boy, and, examining his countenance more and more piercingly, exclaimed:

"Do not laugh any more!"

"I am not laughing," said the child.

Ursus was seized with a shudder from head to foot.

"You do laugh, I tell you."

Then seizing the child with a grasp which would have been one of fury had it not been one of pity, he asked him, roughly:

"Who did that to you?"

The child replied:

"I don't know what you mean."

"How long have you had that laugh?"

"I have always been thus," said the child.

Ursus turned towards the chest, saying in a low voice:

"I thought that work was out of date."

He took from the top of it, very softly, so as not to awaken the infant, the book which he had placed there for a pillow.

"Let us see Conquest," he murmured.

It was a bundle of paper in folio, bound in soft parchment. He turned the pages with his thumb, stopped at a certain one, opened the book wide on the stove, and read:

"'*De Denasatis,*' it is here."

And he continued:

"*Bucca fissa usque ad aures, gengivis denudatis, nasoque murdridato, masca eris, et ridebis semper.*"

"There it is for certain."

Then he replaced the book on one of the shelves, growling:

"It might not be wholesome to inquire too deeply into a case of the kind. We will remain on the surface; laugh away, my boy!"

Just then the little girl awoke. Her good-day was a cry.

"Come, nurse, give her the breast," said Ursus.

The infant sat up. Ursus, taking the phial from the stove, gave it to her to suck.

Then the sun arose. He was level with the horizon. His red rays gleamed through the glass, and struck against the face of the infant, which was turned towards him. Her eyeballs, fixed on the sun, reflected his purple orbit like two mirrors. The eyeballs were immovable, the eyelids also.

"See!" said Ursus. "She is blind."



PART II

BY ORDER OF THE KING

BOOK I

THE EVERLASTING PRESENCE OF THE PAST—MAN REFLECTS MAN

CHAPTER I

LORD CLANCHARLIE



HERE was, in those days, an old tradition.

That tradition was Lord Linnæus Clancharlie.

Linnæus Baron Clancharlie, a contemporary of Cromwell, was one of the peers of England, few in number be it said, who accepted the republic. The reason of his acceptance of it might, indeed, for want of a better, be found in the fact that for the time being, the republic was triumphant. It was a matter of course that Lord Clancharlie should adhere to the republic, as long as the republic had the upper hand; but after the close of the revolution and the fall of the parliamentary government, Lord Clancharlie had persisted in his fidelity to it. It would have been easy for the noble patrician to re-enter the reconstituted upper house, repentance being ever well received on restorations, and Charles II. being a kind prince enough to those who returned to their allegiance to him; but Lord Clancharlie had failed to understand what was due to events. While



LORD CLANCHARLIE.

the nation overwhelmed with acclamation the king, come to retake possession of England; while unanimity was recording its verdict, while the people were bowing their salutation to the monarchy, while the dynasty was rising anew amidst a glorious and triumphant recantation, at the moment when the past was becoming the future, and the future becoming the past, that nobleman remained refractory. He turned his head away from all that joy, and voluntarily exiled himself. While he could have been a peer, he preferred being an outlaw. Years had thus passed away. He had grown old in his fidelity to the dead republic and was therefore crowned with the ridicule which is the natural reward of such folly.

He had retired into Switzerland, and dwelt in a sort of lofty ruin on the banks of the Lake of Geneva. He had chosen his dwelling in the most rugged nook of the lake, between Chillon, where is the dungeon of Bonnivard, and Vevay, where is Ludlow's tomb. The rugged Alps, filled with twilight, winds and clouds, were around him: and he lived there, hidden in the great shadows that fall from the mountains. He was rarely met by any passer-by. The man was out of his country, almost out of his century. At that time, to those who understood and were posted in the affairs of the period, no resistance to established things was justifiable. England was happy; a restoration is as the reconciliation of husband and wife, prince and nation return to each other, no state can be more graceful or more pleasant. Great Britain beamed with joy; to have a king at all was a good deal—but furthermore, the king was a charming one. Charles II. was amiable, a man of pleasure, yet able to govern, and great, if not after the fashion of Louis XIV. He was essentially a gentleman. Charles II. was admired by his subjects. He had made war in Hanover for reasons best known to himself; at least, no one else knew them. He had sold Dunkirk to France, a manœuvre of state policy. The Whig peers, concerning whom Chamberlain says, "The cursed republic infected with its stinking breath several of the high nobility," had had the good sense to bow to the inevitable, to conform to the times, and to resume their seats in the House of Lords. To do so it sufficed that they should take the oath of allegiance to the king. When these facts were considered, the glorious reign, the excellent king, august princes given back by divine mercy to the people's love; when it was remembered that persons of such consideration as Monk, and, later on, Jefferies, had rallied round the throne; that they had been properly rewarded for their loyalty and zeal by the most splendid appointments and the most lucrative offices; that Lord Clancharlie could not be ignorant of this, and that it only depended on himself to be seated by their side, glorious in his honors;

that England had, thanks to her king, risen again to the summit of prosperity; that London was all banquets and carousals; that everybody was rich and enthusiastic, that the court was gallant, gay, and magnificent;—if by chance, far from these splendors, in some melancholy, indescribable half-light, like nightfall, that old man, clad in the same garb as the common people, was observed pale, absent-minded, bent towards the grave, standing on the shore of the lake, scarce heeding the storm and the winter, walking as though at random, his eye fixed, his white hair tossed by the wind of the shadow, silent, pensive, solitary, who could forbear to smile?

It was the sketch of a madman.

Thinking of Lord Clancharlie, of what he might have been and what he was, a smile was indulgent; some laughed out aloud, others could not restrain their anger. It is easy to understand that men of sense were much shocked by the insolence implied by his isolation.

One extenuating circumstance: Lord Clancharlie had never had any brains. Every one agreed on that point.

II

It is disagreeable to see one's fellows practice obstinacy. Imitations of Regulus are not popular, and public opinion holds them in some derision. Stubborn people are like reproaches, and we have a right to laugh at them.

Besides, to sum up, are these perversities, these rugged notches, virtues? Is there not in these excessive advertisements of self-abnegation and of honor, a good deal of ostentation? It is all parade more than anything else. Why such exaggeration of solitude and exile? to carry nothing to extremes is the wise man's maxim. Be in opposition if you choose, blame if you will, but decently, and crying out all the while, "Long live the King." The true virtue is common sense—what falls ought to fall, what succeeds ought to succeed. Providence acts advisedly, it crowns him who deserves the crown; do you pretend to know better than Providence? When matters are settled—when one rule has replaced another—when success is the scale in which truth and falsehood are weighed, in one side the catastrophe, in the other the triumph; then doubt is no longer possible, the honest man rallies to the winning side, and although it may happen to serve his fortune and his family, he does not allow himself to be influenced by that consideration, but thinking only of the public weal, holds out his hand heartily to the conqueror.

What would become of the state if no one consented to serve it?

Would not everything come to a standstill? To keep his place is the duty of a good citizen. Learn to sacrifice your secret preferences. Appointments must be filled, and some one must necessarily sacrifice himself. To be faithful to public functions is true fidelity. The retirement of public officials would paralyze the state. What! banish yourself!—how weak! As an example?—what vanity! As a defiance?—what audacity! What do you set yourself up to be, I wonder? Learn that we are just as good as you. If we chose we too could be intractable and untamable, and do worse things than you; but we prefer to be sensible people. Because I am a Trimalcion, you think that I could not be a Cato! What nonsense!

III

Never was a situation more clearly defined or more decisive than that of 1660. Never had a course of conduct been more plainly indicated to a well-ordered mind. England was out of Cromwell's grasp. Under the republic many irregularities had been committed. British preponderance had been created. With the aid of the Thirty-Years' war, Germany had been overcome; with the aid of the Fronde, France had been humiliated; with the aid of the Duke of Braganza, the power of Spain had been lessened. Cromwell had tamed Mazarin; in signing treaties the Protector of England wrote his name above that of the King of France. The United-Provinces had been put under a fine of eight millions; Algiers and Tunis had been attacked; Jamaica conquered; Lisbon humbled; French rivalry encouraged in Barcelona, and Masaniello in Naples; Portugal had been made fast to England; the seas had been swept of Barbary pirates from Gibraltar to Crete; maritime domination had been founded under two forms, Victory and Commerce. On the 10th of August, 1653, the man of thirty-three victories, the old Admiral who called himself the sailors' grandfather, Martin Happertz Tromp, who had beaten the Spanish, had been destroyed by the English fleet. The Atlantic had been cleared of the Spanish navy, the Pacific of the Dutch, the Mediterranean of the Venetian, and by the Navigation Acts, England had taken possession of the sea-coast of the world. By the ocean she commanded the world; at sea the Dutch flag humbly saluted the British flag. France, in the person of the Ambassador Mancini, bent the knee to Oliver Cromwell; and Cromwell played with Calais and Dunkirk as with two shuttlecocks on a battledore. The continent had been taught to tremble, peace had been dictated, war declared, the British Ensign raised on every pinnacle. By itself the Protector's regiment of Ironsides weighed in the fears of Europe against an army.

Cromwell used to say, "*I wish the Republic of England to be respected, as was respected the Republic of Rome.*" No longer were delusions held sacred; speech was free, the press was free. In the public street men said what they listed; they printed what they pleased without control or censorship. The equilibrium of thrones had been destroyed. The whole order of European monarchy, in which the Stuarts formed a link, had been overturned. But at last England had emerged from this odious order of things, and had won its pardon.

The indulgent Charles II. had granted the declaration of Breda. He had conceded to England oblivion of the period in which the son of the Huntingdon brewer placed his foot on the neck of Louis XIV. England said its *meâ culpâ*, and breathed again. The cup of joy was, as we have just said, full; gibbets for the regicides adding to the universal delight. A restoration is a smile; but a few gibbets are not out of place, and satisfaction is due to the conscience of the public. To be good subjects was thenceforth the people's sole ambition. The spirit of lawlessness had been expelled. Royalty was reconstituted. Men had recovered from the follies of politics. They mocked at revolution, they jeered at the republic, and as to those times when such strange words as *Right*, *Liberty*, *Progress*, had been in the mouth—why, they laughed at such bombast! Admirable was the return to common sense. England had been in a dream. What joy to be quit of such errors! Was ever anything so mad? Where should we be if every one had his rights? Fancy every one's having a hand in the government? Can you imagine a city ruled by its citizens? Why, the citizens are the team, and the team cannot be driver. To put to the vote is to throw to the winds. Would you have states driven like clouds? Disorder cannot build up order. With chaos for an architect, the edifice would be a Babel. And, besides, what tyranny is this pretended liberty! As for me, I wish to enjoy myself; not to govern. It is a bore to have to vote; I want to dance. A prince is a providence, and takes care of us all. Truly the king is generous to take so much trouble for our sakes. Besides, he is to the manner born. He knows what it is. It's his business. Peace, War, Legislation, Finance—what have the people to do with such things? Of course the people have to pay; of course the people have to serve; but that should suffice them. They have a place in policy; from them come two essential things, the army and the budget. To be liable to contribute, and to be liable to serve; is not that enough? What more should they want? They are the military and the financial arm. A magnificent *rôle*. The king reigns for them, and they must reward him accordingly. Taxation and the civil list are the salaries paid by the peoples and earned by the prince. The people give

their blood and their money, in return for which they are led. To wish to lead themselves! what an absurd idea! They require a guide; being ignorant, they are blind. Has not the blind man his dog? Only the people have a lion, the king, who consents to act the dog. How kind of him!

But why are the people ignorant? because it is good for them. Ignorance is the guardian of Virtue. Where there is no perspective there is no ambition. The ignorant man is in useful darkness, which, suppressing sight, suppresses covetousness: whence innocence. He who reads, thinks; who thinks, reasons. But not to reason is duty; and happiness as well. These truths are incontestable; society is based on them.

Thus had sound social doctrines been re-established in England; thus had the nation been reinstated. At the same time a correct taste in literature was reviving. Shakspeare was despised, Dryden admired. "*Dryden is the greatest poet of England, and of the century,*" said Atterbury, the translator of "Achitophel." It was about the time when M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, wrote to Saumaise, who had done the author of "Paradise Lost" the honor to refute and abuse him,—"*How can you trouble yourself about so mean a thing as that Milton?*" Everything was falling into its proper place: Dryden above, Shakspeare below; Charles II. on the throne, Cromwell on the gibbet. England was raising herself out of the shame and the excesses of the past. It is a great happiness for nations to be led back by monarchy to good order in the state and good taste in letters.

That such benefits should be misunderstood, is difficult to believe. To turn the cold shoulder to Charles II., to reward with ingratitude the magnanimity which he displayed in ascending the throne—was not such conduct abominable? Lord Linnaeus Clancharlie had inflicted this vexation upon honest men. To sulk at his country's happiness, alack, what aberration!

We know that in 1650 Parliament had drawn up this form of declaration:—"*I promise to remain faithful to the republic, without king, sovereign, or lord.*" Under pretext of having taken this monstrous oath, Lord Clancharlie was living out of the kingdom, and, in the face of the general joy, thought that he had the right to be sad. He had a morose esteem for that which was no more, and was absurdly attached to things which had been.

To excuse him was impossible. The kindest-hearted abandoned him; his friends had long done him the honor to believe that he had entered the republican ranks only to observe the more closely the flaws in the republican armor, and to smite it the more surely when the day

should come, for the sacred cause of the king. These lurkings in ambush for the convenient hour to strike the enemy a death-blow in the back, are attributes of loyalty. Such a line of conduct had been expected of Lord Clancharlie, so strong was the wish to judge him favorably; but, in the face of his strange persistence in republicanism, people were obliged to lower their estimate. Evidently Lord Clancharlie was confirmed in his convictions—that is to say, an idiot!

The explanation given by the indulgent, wavered between puerile stubbornness and senile obstinacy.

The severe and the just went further; they blighted the name of the renegade. Folly has its rights, but it has also its limits. A man may be a brute, but he has no right to be a rebel. And, after all, what was this Lord Clancharlie? A deserter. He had fled his camp, the aristocracy, for that of the enemy, the people. This faithful man was a traitor. It is true that he was a traitor to the stronger, and faithful to the weaker; it is true that the camp repudiated by him was the conquering camp, and the camp adopted by him, the conquered; it is true that by his treason he lost everything—his political previleges and his domestic hearth, his title and his country. He gained nothing but ridicule, he attained no benefit but exile. But what does all this prove?—that he was a fool. Granted.

Plainly a dupe and traitor in one.

Let a man be as great a fool as he likes, so that he does not set a bad example. Fools need only be civil, and in consideration thereof they may aim at being the basis of monarchies. The narrowness of Clancharlie's mind was incomprehensible. His eyes were still dazzled by the phantasmagoria of the revolution. He had allowed himself to be taken in by the republic—yes; and cast out. He was an affront to his country. The attitude he assumed was downright felony. Absence was an insult. He held aloof from the public joy as from the plague. In his voluntary banishment he found some indescribable refuge from the national rejoicing. He treated loyalty as a contagion: over the widespread gladness at the revival of the monarchy, denounced by him as a lazaretto, he was the black flag. What! could he look thus askance at order reconstituted, a nation exalted, and a religion restored? Over such serenity why cast his shadow? Take umbrage at England's contentment! Must he be the one blot in the clear blue sky? Be as a threat! Protest against a nation's will! refuse his Yes to the universal consent! It would be disgusting, if it were not the part of a fool.

Clancharlie could not have taken into account the fact that it did not matter if one had taken the wrong turn with Cromwell, as long as one found one's way back into the right path with Monk.

Take Monk's case. He commands the republican army. Charles II., having been informed of his honesty, writes to him. Monk, who combines virtue with tact, dissimulates at first, then suddenly at the head of his troops dissolves the rebel parliament, and re-establishes the king on the throne. Monk is created Duke of Albemarle, has the honor of having saved society, becomes very rich, sheds a glory over his own time, is created Knight of the Garter, and has the prospect of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Such glory is the reward of British fidelity!

Lord Clancharlie could never rise to a sense of duty thus carried out. He had the infatuation and obstinacy of an exile. He contented himself with hollow phrases. He was tongue-tied by pride. The words conscience and dignity are but words, after all. One must penetrate to the depths. These depths Lord Clancharlie had not reached. His "eye was single," and before committing an act, he wished to observe it so closely as to be able to judge it by more senses than one. Hence arose absurd disgust to the facts examined. No man can be a statesman who gives way to such overstrained delicacy. Excess of conscientiousness degenerates into infirmity. Scruple is one-handed when a sceptre is to be seized, and an eunuch when fortune is to be wedded. Distrust scruples; they drag you too far. Unreasonable fidelity is like a ladder leading into a cavern—one step down, another, then another, and there you are in the dark. The clever re-ascend; fools remain in it. Conscience must not be allowed to practice such austerity. If it be, it will fall until, from transition to transition, it at length reaches the deep gloom of political prudery. Then one is lost. Thus it was with Lord Clancharlie.

Principles terminate in a precipice.

He was walking, his hands behind him, along the shores of the Lake of Geneva. A fine way of getting on!

In London they sometimes spoke of the exile. He was accused before the tribunal of public opinion. They pleaded for and against him. The cause having been heard, he was acquitted on the ground of stupidity.

Many zealous friends of the former republic had given their adherence to the Stuarts. For this they deserve praise. They naturally calumniated him a little. The obstinate are repulsive to the compliant. Men of sense, in favor of good places at Court, weary of his disagreeable attitude, took pleasure in saying, "*If he has not rallied to the throne, it is because he has not been sufficiently paid,*" etc. "*He wanted the chancellorship which the king has given to Hyde.*" One of his old friends went so far as to whisper, "*He told me so himself.*" Remote as was the solitude

of Linnæus Clancharlie, something of this talk would reach him through the outlaws he met, such as old regicides like Andrew Broughton, who lived at Lausanne. Clancharlie confined himself to an imperceptible shrug of the shoulders, a sign of profound deterioration. On one occasion he added to the shrug these few words, murmured in a low voice, "*I pity those who believe such things.*"

IV

Charles II., good man! despised him. The happiness of England under Charles II. was more than happiness, it was enchantment. A restoration is like an old oil painting, blackened by time and re-varnished. All the past re-appeared, good old manners returned, beautiful women reigned and governed. Evelyn notices it. We read it in his journal, "Luxury, profaneness, contempt of God. I saw the king on Sunday evening with his courtesans, Portsmouth, Cleveland, Mazarin, and two or three others, all nearly naked, in the gaming-room." We feel that there is ill-nature in this description, for Evelyn was a grumbling Puritan, tainted with republican reveries. He did not appreciate the profitable example given by kings in those grand Babylonian gayeties, which, after all, maintain luxury. He did not understand the utility of vice. Here is a maxim: Do not extirpate vice, if you want to have charming women; if you do you are like idiots who destroy the chrysalis whilst they delight in the butterfly.

Charles II., as we have said, scarcely remembered that a rebel called Clancharlie existed; but James II. was more heedful. Charles II. governed gently, it was his way; we may add, that he did not govern the worse on that account. A sailor sometimes makes on a rope intended to baffle the wind, a slack knot which he leaves to the wind to tighten. Such is the stupidity of the storm and of the people.

The slack knot very soon becomes a tight one. So did the government of Charles II.

Under James II. the throttling began; a necessary throttling of what remained of the revolution. James II. had a laudable ambition to be an efficient king. The reign of Charles II. was, in his opinion, but a sketch of restoration. James wished for a still more complete return to order. He had, in 1660, deplored that they had confined themselves to the hanging of ten regicides. He was a more genuine reconstructor of authority. He infused vigor into serious principles. He installed true justice, which is superior to sentimental declamations, and attends, above all things, to the interests of society. In his protecting severities

we recognize the father of the state. He entrusted the hand of justice to Jefferies, and its sword to Kirke. That useful Colonel, one day, hung and rehung the same man, a republican, asking him each time:

"Will you renounce the republic?"

The villain, having each time said "No," was dispatched.



"*I hanged him four times*," said Kirke, with satisfaction. The renewal of executions is a great sign of power in the executive authority.

Lady Lisle, who, though she had sent her son to fight against Monmouth, had concealed two rebels in her house, was executed; another rebel, having been honorable enough to declare that an anabaptist female

had given him shelter, was pardoned, and the woman was burned alive. Kirke, on another occasion, gave a town to understand that he knew its principles to be republican, by hanging nineteen burgesses. These reprisals were certainly legitimate, for it must be remembered that, under Cromwell, they cut off the noses and ears of the stone saints in the churches. James II., who had had the sense to choose Jefferies and Kirke, was a prince imbued with true religion; he practiced mortification in the ugliness of his mistresses; he listened to le Père la Colombière, a preacher almost as unctuous as le Père Cheminais, but with more fire, who had the glory of being, during the first part of his life, the counselor of James II., and, during the latter, the inspirer of Marie Alacoque. It was, thanks to this strong religious nourishment, that later on, James II. was enabled to bear exile with dignity, and to exhibit, in his retirement at Saint Germain, the spectacle of a king rising superior to adversity, calmly touching for king's evil, and conversing with Jesuits.

It will be readily understood that such a king would trouble himself to a certain extent about such a rebel as Lord Linnæus Clancharlie. Hereditary peerages have a certain hold on the future, and it was evident that if any precautions were necessary with regard to that lord, James II. was not the man to hesitate.



CHAPTER II

LORD DAVID DIRRY-MOIR

LORD LINNÆUS CLANCHARLIE had not always been old and proscribed; he had had his phase of youth and passion. We know from Harrison and Pride that Cromwell, when young, loved women and pleasure, a taste which, at times (another reading of the text "Woman"), betrays a seditious man. Distrust the loosely-clasped girdle. *Male præcinctum juvenem cavete.* Lord Clancharlie, like Cromwell, had had his wild hours and his irregularities. He was known to have had a natural child, a son. This son was born in England in the last days of the republic, just as his father was going into exile. Hence he had never seen his father. This bastard of Lord Clancharlie had grown up as page at the court of Charles II. He was styled Lord David Dirry-Moir: he was a lord by courtesy, his mother being a woman of quality. The mother, while Lord Clancharlie was becoming an owl in Switzerland, made up her mind, being a beauty, to give over sulking, and was forgiven that Goth, her first lover, by one undeniably polished and at the same time a royalist, for it was the king himself.

She had been but a short time the mistress of Charles II., sufficiently long, however, to have made his majesty—who was delighted to have won so pretty a woman from the republic—bestow on the little Lord David, the son of his conquest, the office of keeper of the stick, which made that bastard officer, boarded at the king's expense, by a natural revulsion of feeling, an ardent adherent of the Stuarts. Lord David was for some time one of the hundred and seventy wearing the great sword, while afterwards, entering the corps of pensioners, he became one of the forty who bear the gilded halberd. He had, besides being one of the noble company instituted by Henry VIII. as a body-

guard, the privilege of laying the dishes on the king's table. Thus it was that whilst his father was growing gray in exile, Lord David prospered under Charles II.

After which he prospered under James II.

The king is dead. Long live the king! It is the *non deficit alter, aureus.*

It was on the accession of the Duke of York, that he obtained permission to call himself David Lord Dirry-Moir, from an estate which his mother, who had just died, had left him, in that great forest of Scotland, where he found the Krag, a bird which scoops out a nest with its beak in the trunk of the oak.

II

James II. was a king, and affected to be a general. He loved to surround himself with young officers. He showed himself frequently in public on horseback, in a helmet and cuirass, with a huge projecting wig hanging below the helmet and over the cuirass—a sort of equestrian statue of imbecile war. He took a fancy to the graceful mien of the young Lord David. He liked the royalist for being the son of a republican. The repudiation of a father does not damage the foundation of a court fortune. The king made Lord David gentleman of the bedchamber, at a salary of a thousand a year.

It was a fine promotion. A gentleman of the bedchamber sleeps near the king every night, on a bed which is made up for him. There are twelve gentlemen, who relieve each other.

Lord David, whilst he held that post, was also head of the king's granary, giving out corn for the horses and receiving a salary of 260*l.* Under him were the five coachmen of the king, the five postilions of the king, the five grooms of the king, the twelve footmen of the king, and the four chair-bearers of the king. He had the management of the race-horses which the king kept at Newmarket, and which cost his majesty 600*l.* a year. He worked his will on the king's wardrobe, from which the knights of the garter are furnished with their robes of ceremony. He was saluted to the ground by the usher of the black rod, who belongs to the king. That usher, under James II., was the knight Duppa. Mr. Baker, who was clerk of the crown, and Mr. Brown, who was clerk of the Parliament, bowed low to Lord David. The court of England, which is magnificent, is a model of hospitality. Lord David presided, as one of the twelve, at banquets and receptions. He had the glory of standing behind the king on offertory days, when the king gives to the church the golden *byzantium;* on collar-days, when the



LORD DAVID DIRRY-MOIR.

king wears the collar of his order; on communion days, when no one takes the sacrament excepting the king and the princes. It was he who, on Holy Thursday, introduced into his majesty's presence the twelve poor men to whom the king gives as many silver pence as the years of his age, and as many shillings as the years of his reign. The duty devolved on him, when the king was ill, to call to the assistance of his majesty the two grooms of the almonry, who are priests, and to prevent the approach of doctors without permission from the council of state. Besides, he was lieutenant-colonel of the Scotch Regiment of Guards, the one which plays the Scottish march. As such, he made several campaigns, and with glory, for he was a gallant soldier. He was a brave lord, well-made, handsome, generous, and majestic in look and in manner. His person was like his quality. He was tall in stature, as well as high in birth.

At one time he stood a chance of being made groom of the stole, which would have given him the privilege of putting the king's shirt on his majesty: but to hold that office it was necessary to be either prince or peer. Now, to create a peer is a serious thing; it is to create a peerage, and that makes many people jealous. It is a favor; a favor which gives the king one friend and a hundred enemies, without taking into account that the one friend becomes ungrateful. James II., from policy, was indisposed to create peerages, but he transferred them freely. The transfer of a peerage produces no sensation. It is simply the continuation of a name. The order is little affected by it.

The good-will of royalty had no objection to raise Lord David Dirry-Moir to the upper house so long as it could do so by means of a substituted peerage. Nothing would have pleased his majesty better than to transform Lord David Dirry-Moir, lord by courtesy, into a lord by right.

III

THE opportunity occurred.

One day it was announced that several things had happened to the old exile, Lord Clancharlie, the most important of which was that he was dead. Death does just this much good to folks: it causes a little talk about them. People related what they knew, or what they thought they knew, of the last years of Lord Linnæus. What they said was probably legend and conjecture. If these random tales were to be credited, Lord Clancharlie must have had his republicanism intensified towards the end of his life, to the extent of marrying (strange obstinacy of the exile!) Ann Bradshaw, the daughter of a regicide; they were

precise about the name. She had also died, it was said, but in giving birth to a boy. If these details should prove to be correct, his child would, of course, be the legitimate and rightful heir of Lord Clancharlie. These reports, however, were extremely vague in form, and were rumors rather than facts. Circumstances which happened in Switzerland, in those days, were as remote from the England of that period as those which take place in China from the England of to-day. Lord Clancharlie must have been fifty-nine at the time of his marriage, they said, and sixty at the birth of his son, and must have died shortly after, leaving his infant orphaned both of father and mother. This was possible, perhaps, but improbable. They added that the child was beautiful as the day—just as we read in all the fairy tales. King James put an end to these rumors, evidently without foundation, by declaring, one fine morning, Lord David Dirry-Moir sole and positive heir *in default of legitimate issue*, and by his royal pleasure, of Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, his natural father, *the absence of all other issue and descent being established*, patents of which grant were registered in the House of Lords. By these patents the king instituted Lord David Dirry-Moir, in the titles, rights, and prerogatives of the late Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, on the sole condition that Lord David should wed, when she attained a marriageable age, a girl who was, at that time, a mere infant a few months old, and whom the king had, in her cradle, created a duchess, no one knew exactly why; or, rather, every one knew why. This little infant was called the Duchess Josiana.

The English fashion then ran on Spanish names. One of Charles II.'s bastards was called Carlos, Earl of Plymouth. It is likely that Josiana was a contraction for Josefa-y-Ana. Josiana, however, may have been a name—the feminine of Josias. One of Henri III.'s gentlemen was called Josias du Passage.

It was to this little duchess that the king granted the peerage of Clancharlie. She was a peeress till there should be a peer; the peer should be her husband. The peerage was founded on a double castleward, the barony of Clancharlie and the barony of Hunkerville; besides, the barons of Clancharlie were, in recompense of an ancient feat of arms, and by royal license, Marquises of Corleone, in Sicily.

Peers of England cannot bear foreign titles; there are, nevertheless, exceptions; thus—Henry Arundel, Baron Arundel of Wardour, was, as well as Lord Clifford, a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, of which Lord Cowper is a prince. The Duke of Hamilton is Duke of Chatelherault, in France; Basil Feilding, Earl of Denbigh, is Count of Hapsburg, of Lauffenberg, and of Rheinfelden, in Germany. The Duke of Marlborough was Prince of Mindelheim, in Suabia, just as the Duke

of Wellington was Prince of Waterloo, in Belgium. The same Lord Wellington was a Spanish Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo, and Portuguese Count of Vimiera.

There were in England, and there are still, lands both noble and



common. The lands of the Lords of Clancharlie were all noble. These lands, burghs, bailiwicks, fiefs, rents, freeholds, and domains, adherent to the peerage of Clancharlie-Hunkerville, belonged provisionally to Lady Josiana, and the king declared that, once married to Josiana, Lord David Dirry-Moir should be Baron Clancharlie.

Besides the Clancharlie inheritance, Lady Josiana had her own

fortune. She possessed great wealth, much of which was derived from the gifts of *Madame sans queue* to the Duke of York. *Madame sans queue* is short for Madame. Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans, the lady of highest rank in France after the queen, was thus called.

IV

HAVING prospered under Charles and James, Lord David prospered under William. His Jacobite feeling did not reach to the extent of following James into exile. While he continued to love his legitimate king, he had the good sense to serve the usurper; he was, moreover, although sometimes disposed to rebel against discipline, an excellent officer. He passed from the land to the sea forces, and distinguished himself in the White Squadron. He rose in it to be what was then called captain of a light frigate. Altogether he made a very fine fellow, carrying to a great extent the eleganeies of vice; a bit of a poet, like every one else; a good servant of the state, a good servant to the prince; assiduous at feasts, at galas, at ladies' receptions, at ceremonies, and in battle; servile in a gentleman-like way; very haughty; with eyesight dull or keen, according to the object examined; inclined to integrity; obsequious or arrogant, as occasion required; frank and sincere on first acquaintance, with the power of assuming the mask afterwards; very observant of the smiles and frowns of the royal humor; careless before a sword's point; always ready to risk his life on a sign from his majesty with heroism and complacency; capable of any insult but of no impoliteness; a man of courtesy and etiquette, proud of kneeling at great regal ceremonies; of a gay valor; a courtier on the surface, a paladin below; quite young at forty-five. Lord David sang French songs, an elegant gayety which had delighted Charles II. He loved eloquence and fine language. He greatly admired those celebrated discourses which are called the funeral orations of Bossuet.

From his mother he had inherited almost enough to live on, about 10,000*l.* a year. He managed to get on with it—by running into debt. In magnificence, extravagance, and novelty he was without a rival. Directly he was copied he changed his fashion. On horseback he wore loose boots of cow-hide, which turned over, with spurs. He had hats like nobody else's; unheard-of lace, and bands of which he alone had the pattern.

CHAPTER III

THE DUCHESS JOSIANA

TOWARDS 1705, although Lady Josiana was twenty-three and Lord David forty-four, the wedding had not yet taken place, and that for the best reasons in the world. Did they hate each other? Far from it; but what cannot escape from you inspires you with no haste to obtain it. Josiana wanted to remain free, David to remain young. To have no tie until as late as possible appeared to him to be a prolongation of youth. Middle-aged young men abounded in those rakish times. They grew gray as young fops. The wig was an accomplice; later on, powder became the auxiliary. At fifty-five Lord Charles Gerrard, Baron Gerrard, one of the Gerrards of Bromley, filled London with his successes. The young and pretty Duchess of Buckingham, Countess of Coventry, made a fool of herself for love of the handsome Thomas Bellasys, Viscount Fauconberg, who was sixty-seven. People quoted the famous verses of Corneille, the septuagenarian, to a girl of twenty—"*Marquise, si mon visage.*" Women, too, had their successes in the autumn of life. Witness Ninon and Marion. Such were the models of the day.

Josiana and David carried on a flirtation of a particular shade. They did not love, they pleased, each other. To be at each other's side sufficed them. Why hasten the conclusion? The novels of those days carried lovers and engaged couples to that kind of stage which was the most becoming. Besides, Josiana, while she knew herself to be a bastard, felt herself a princess, and carried her authority over him with a high tone in all their arrangements. She had a fancy for Lord David. Lord David was handsome, but that was over and above the bargain. She considered him to be fashionable.

To be fashionable is everything. Caliban, fashionable and magnificent, would distance Ariel, poor. Lord David was handsome; so much

the better. The danger in being handsome is being insipid; and that he was not. He betted, boxed, ran into debt. Josiana thought great things of his horses, his dogs, his losses at play, his mistresses. Lord David, on his side, bowed down before the fascinations of the Duchess Josiana—a maiden without spot or scruple, haughty, inaccessible and audacious. He addressed sonnets to her, which Josiana sometimes read. In these sonnets he declared that to possess Josiana would be to rise to the stars, which did not prevent his always putting the ascent off to the following year. He waited in the antechamber outside Josiana's heart; and this suited the convenience of both. At court all admired the good taste of this delay. Lady Josiana said, "It is a bore that I should be obliged to marry Lord David; I, who would desire nothing better than to be in love with him!"

Josiana was "the flesh." Nothing could be more resplendent. She was very tall—too tall. Her hair was of that tinge which might be called red gold. She was plump, fresh, strong, and rosy, with immense boldness and wit. She had eyes which were too intelligible. She had neither lovers nor chastity. She walled herself round with pride. Men! oh, fie! a god only would be worthy of her, or a monster. If virtue consists in the protection of an inaccessible position, Josiana possessed all possible virtue, but without any innocence. She disdained intrigues; but she would not have been displeased had she been supposed to have engaged in some, provided that the objects were uncommon, and proportioned to the merits of one so highly placed. She thought little of her reputation, but much of her glory. To appear yielding, and to be unapproachable, is perfection. Josiana felt herself majestic and material. Hers was a cumbrous beauty. She usurped rather than charmed. She trod upon hearts. She was earthly. She would have been as much astonished at being proved to have a soul in her bosom as wings on her back. She discoursed on Locke; she was polite; she was suspected of knowing Arabic.

To be the "flesh" and to be woman are two different things. Where a woman is vulnerable, on the side of pity, for instance, which so readily turns to love, Josiana was not. Not that she was unfeeling. The ancient comparison of flesh to marble is absolutely false. The beauty of flesh consists in not being marble; its beauty is to palpitate, to tremble, to blush, to bleed, to have firmness without hardness; to be white without being cold; to have its sensations and its infirmities; its beauty is to be life, and marble is death.

Flesh, when it attains a certain degree of beauty, has almost a claim to the right of nudity; it conceals itself in its own dazzling charms as in a veil. He who might have looked upon Josiana nude, would have per-

ceived her outlines only through a surrounding glory. She would have shown herself without hesitation to a satyr or a eunuch. She had the self-possession of a goddess. To have made her nudity a torment, ever eluding a pursuing Tantalus, would have been an amusement to her.

The king had made her a duchess, and Jupiter a Nereid—a double irradiation of which the strange brightness of this creature was com-



posed. In admiring her you felt yourself becoming a pagan and a lackey. Her origin had been bastardy and the ocean. She appeared to have emerged from the foam. From the stream had risen the first jet of her destiny; but the spring was royal. In her there was something of the wave, of chance, of the patrician, and of the tempest. She was well read and accomplished. Never had a passion approached her, yet she had sounded them all. She had a disgust for realizations, and at

the same time a taste for them. If she had stabbed herself, it would, like Lucretia, not have been until afterwards. She was a virgin stained with every defilement in its visionary stage. She was a possible Astarte in a real Diana. She was, in the insolence of high birth, tempting and inaccessible. Nevertheless, she might find it amusing to plan a fall for herself. She dwelt in a halo of glory, half wishing to descend from it, and perhaps feeling curious to know what a fall was like. She was a little too heavy for her cloud. To err is a diversion. Princely unconstraint has the privilege of experiment; and what is frailty in a plebeian, is only frolic in a duchess. Josiana was in everything—in birth, in beauty, in irony, in brilliancy—almost a queen. She had felt a moment's enthusiasm for Louis de Boufflers, who used to break horse-shoes between his fingers. She regretted that Hercules was dead. She lived in some undefined expectation of a voluptuous and supreme ideal.

Morally, Josiana brought to one's mind the line of Horace, *Desinit in piscem:*

"Un beau torse de femme en hydre se termine."

Hers was a noble neck, a splendid bosom, heaving harmoniously over a royal heart, a glance full of life and light, a countenance pure and haughty, and who knows? below the surface was there not, in a semi-transparent and misty depth, an undulating, supernatural prolongation, perchance deformed and dragon-like—a proud virtue ending in vice in the depths of dreams.

II

With all that she was a prude.

It was the fashion.

Remember Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was of a type that prevailed in England for three centuries: the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth. Elizabeth was more than English, she was Anglican. Hence the deep respect of the Episcopalian Church for that queen—a respect resented by the Church of Rome, which counterbalanced it with a dash of excommunication. In the mouth of Sixtus V., when anathematizing Elizabeth, malediction turned to madrigal: "*Un gran cervello di principessa,*" he says. Mary Stuart, less concerned with the church and more with the woman part of the question, had little respect for her sister Elizabeth; and wrote to her as queen to queen and coquette to prude: "Your disinclination to marriage arises from your not wishing to lose the liberty of being made

love to." Mary Stuart played with the fan, Elizabeth with the axe. An uneven match. They were rivals, besides, in literature. Mary Stuart composed French verses; Elizabeth translated Horace. The ugly Elizabeth decreed herself beautiful; liked quatrains and acrostics; had the keys of towns presented to her by cupids; bit her lips, after the Italian fashion, rolled her eyes after the Spanish; had in her wardrobe three thousand dresses and costumes, of which several were for the character of Minerva and Amphitrite; esteemed the Irish for the width of their shoulders; covered her farthingale with braids and spangles; loved roses; cursed, swore, and stamped; struck her maids of honor with her clenched fists; used to send Dudley to the devil; beat Burleigh, the Chancellor, who would cry—poor old fool! spat on Mathew; collared Hatton; boxed the ears of Essex; showed her legs to Bassompierre; and was a virgin.

What she did for Bassompierre, the Queen of Sheba had done for Solomon,* consequently she was right, Holy Writ having created the precedent. That which is biblical may well be Anglican. Biblical precedent goes so far as to speak of a child, who was called Ebnehaquem or Melilechet, that is to say, the Wise Man's son.

Why object to such manners? Cynicism is at least as good as hypocrisy.

Nowadays England, whose Loyola is named Wesley, casts down her eyes a little at the remembrance of that past age. She is vexed at the memory, yet proud of it.

Amidst such manners as these, a taste for deformity existed, especially amongst women, and singularly amongst beautiful women. Where is the use of being beautiful if one does not possess a baboon? Where is the charm of being a queen if one cannot bandy words with a dwarf? Mary Stuart had "been kind" to the bandy-legged Rizzio. Maria Theresa, of Spain, had been "somewhat familiar" with a negro. Whence the *black abbess.* In the alcoves of the great century, a hump was the fashion; witness the Marshal of Luxembourg, and before Luxembourg, Condé, "such a pretty little man!"

Beauties themselves might be ill-made without detriment; it was admitted. Anne Boleyn had one breast bigger than the other, six fingers to one hand, and a projecting tooth; La Vallière was bandy-legged; which did not hinder Henry VIII. from going mad for the one, and Louis XIV. for the other.

Morals were equally awry. There was not a woman of high rank

---

* Regina Saba coram rege crura denudavit.—*Schicklardus in Proœmio Tarich Jersici, F. 65.*

who was not teratological. Agnes contained the principles of Melusina. They were women by day, ghouls by night. They sought the scaffold to kiss the heads of the newly beheaded on their iron stakes. Marguerite de Valois, a predecessor of the prudes, wore, fastened to her belt, the hearts of her dead lovers in tin boxes, padlocked. Henry IV. had hidden himself under her farthingale.

In the eighteenth century the Duchess de Berry, daughter of the Regent, was in herself an abstract, of obscene and royal type, of all these creatures.

These fine ladies, moreover, knew Latin. From the sixteenth century this had been accounted a feminine accomplishment. Lady Jane Grey had carried fashion to the point of knowing Hebrew. The Duchess Josiana Latinized. Then (another fine thing) she was secretly a Catholic; after the manner of her uncle, Charles II., rather than her father, James II. James II. had lost his crown for his Catholicism, and Josiana did not care to risk her peerage. Thus it was that while a Catholic amongst her intimate friends and the refined of both sexes, she was outwardly a Protestant for the benefit of the riff-raff.

This is the pleasant view to take of religion. You enjoy all the good things belonging to the official Episcopalian Church, and later on you die, like Grotius, in the odor of Catholicity, having the glory of a mass being said for you by le Père Petau.

Although plump and healthy, Josiana was, we repeat, a perfect prude.

At times, her sleepy and voluptuous way of dragging out the end of her phrases, was like the creeping of a tiger's paws in the jungle.

The advantage of prudes is that they disorganize the human race. They deprive it of the honor of their adherence. Beyond all, keep the human species at a distance; this is a point of the greatest importance.

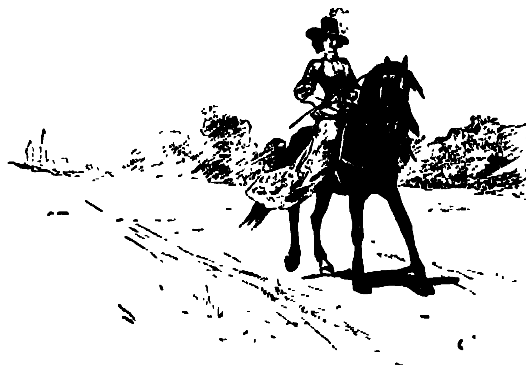
When one has not got Olympus, one must take the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Juno resolves herself into Araminta. A pretension to divinity not admitted, creates affectation. In default of thunder-claps there is impertinence. The temple shrivels into the boudoir. Not having the power to be a goddess, she is an idol.

There is besides, in prudery, a certain pedantry which is pleasing to women. The coquette and the pedant are neighbors. Their kinship is visible in the fop. The subtile is derived from the sensual. Gluttony affects delicacy, a grimace of disgust conceals cupidity. And then woman feels her weak point guarded by all that casuistry of gallantry which takes the place of scruples in prudes. It is a line of circumvallation with a ditch. Every prude puts on an air of repugnance. It is a protection. She will consent, but she disdains—for the present.

Josiana had an uneasy conscience. She felt such a leaning towards immodesty that she was a prude. The recoils of pride in the direction opposed to our vices lead us to those of a contrary nature. It was the excessive effort to be chaste which made her a prude. To be too much on the defensive points to a secret desire for attack; the shy woman is not strait-laced. She shut herself up in the arrogance of the exceptional circumstances of her rank, meditating, perhaps, all the while some sudden lapse from it.

It was the dawn of the eighteenth century. England was a sketch of what France was during the regency. Walpole and Dubois are not unlike. Marlborough was fighting against his former king, James II., to whom it was said he had sold his sister, Miss Churchill. Bolingbroke was in his meridian, and Richelieu in his dawn. Gallantry found its convenience in a certain medley of ranks. Men were equalized by the same vices as they were later on, perhaps, by the same ideas. Degradation of rank, an aristocratic prelude, began what the revolution was to complete. It was not very far off the time when Jélyotte was seen publicly sitting, in broad daylight, on the bed of the Marquise d'Epinay. It is true (for manners re-echo each other) that in the sixteenth century Smeton's nightcap had been found under Anne Boleyn's pillow.

If the word woman signifies fault, as I forget what Council decided, never was woman so womanlike as then. Never, covering her frailty by her charms, and her weakness by her omnipotence, has she claimed absolution more imperiously. In making the forbidden the permitted fruit, Eve fell; in making the permitted the forbidden fruit, she triumphs. That is the climax. In the eighteenth century the wife bolts out her husband. She shuts herself up in Eden with Satan. Adam is left outside.



III

All Josiana's instincts impelled her to yield herself gallantly rather than to give herself legally. To surrender on the score of gallantry implies learning, recalls Menalcas and Amaryllis, and is almost a literary act. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, putting aside the attraction of ugliness for ugliness' sake, had no other motive for yielding to Pélisson.

The maiden a sovereign, the wife a subject, such was the old English notion. Josiana was deferring the hour of this subjection as long as she could. She must eventually marry Lord David, since such was the royal pleasure. It was a necessity, doubtless; but what a pity! Josiana appreciated Lord David and showed him off. There was between them a tacit agreement, neither to conclude nor to break off the engagement. They eluded each other. This method of making love, one step in advance, and two back, is expressed in the dances of the period, the minuet and the gavotte.

It is unbecoming to be married—fades one's ribbons, and makes one look old. An espousal is a dreary absorption of brilliancy. A woman handed over to you by a notary, how commonplace! The brutality of marriage creates definite situations; suppresses the will; kills choice; has a syntax, like grammar; replaces inspiration by orthography; makes a dictation of love; disperses all Life's mysteries; diminishes the rights both of sovereign and subject; by a turn of the scale destroys the charming equilibrium of the sexes, the one robust in bodily strength, the other all-powerful in feminine weakness: strength on one side, beauty on the other; makes one a master and the other a servant, while without marriage one is a slave, the other a queen.

To make Love prosaically decent, how gross! to deprive it of all impropriety, how dull!

Lord David was ripening. Forty; 'tis a marked period. He did not perceive this, and in truth he looked no more than thirty. He considered it more amusing to desire Josiana than to possess her. He possessed others. He had mistresses. On the other hand, Josiana had dreams.

The Duchess Josiana had a peculiarity, less rare than it is supposed. One of her eyes was blue and the other black. Her pupils were made for love and hate, for happiness and misery. Night and day were mingled in her look.

Her ambition was this; to show herself capable of impossibilities. One day she said to Swift:

"You people fancy that you know what scorn is."

"You people," meant the human race.

She was a skin-deep Papist. Her Catholicism did not exceed the amount necessary for fashion. She would have been a Puseyite in the present day. She wore great dresses of velvet, satin, or moire, some composed of fifteen or sixteen yards of material, with embroideries of gold and silver; and round her waist many knots of pearls, alternating with other precious stones. She was extravagant in gold lace. Sometimes she wore an embroidered cloth jacket like a bachelor. She rode on a man's saddle, notwithstanding the invention of side-saddles, introduced into England in the fourteenth century by Anne, wife of Richard II. She washed her face, arms, shoulders, and neck in sugar-candy, diluted in white of egg, after the fashion of Castile. There came over her face, after any one had spoken wittily in her presence, a reflective smile of singular grace.

She was free from malice, and rather good-natured than otherwise.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEADER OF FASHION

JOSIANA was bored. The fact is so natural as to be scarcely worth mentioning.

Lord David held the position of judge in the gay life of London. He was looked up to by the nobility and gentry. Let us register a glory of Lord David's. He was daring enough to wear his own hair. The reaction against the wig was beginning. Just as in



1824 Eugène Devéria* was the first to allow his beard to grow, so in 1702 Prince Devereux was the first to risk wearing his own hair in public disguised by artful curling. For to risk one's hair was almost to risk one's head. The indignation was universal. Nevertheless,

* Portrait of Eugène Devéria, by himself, in 1824. Given to my brother Abel, from whom I received it. (*Victor Hugo in the MS. of this book.*)

Prince Devereux was Viscount Hereford, and a peer of England. He was insulted, and the deed was well worth the insult. In the hottest part of the row Lord David suddenly appeared without his wig and in his own hair. Such conduct shakes the foundations of society. Lord David was insulted even more than Viscount Hereford. He held his ground. Prince Devereux was the first, Lord David Dirry-Moir the second. It is sometimes more difficult to be second than first. It requires less genius, but more courage. The first, intoxicated by the novelty, may ignore the danger; the second sees the abyss, and rushes into it. Lord David flung himself into the abyss of no longer wearing a wig. Later on these lords found imitators. Following these two revolutionists, men found sufficient audacity to wear their own hair, and powder was introduced as an extenuating circumstance.

In order to establish, before we pass on, an important period of history, we should remark that the first blow in the war of wigs was really struck by a Queen, Christina of Sweden, who wore man's clothes, and had appeared in 1680, in her hair of golden brown, powdered, and brushed up from her head. She had, besides, says Misson, a slight beard. The pope, on his part, by a bull of March, 1694, had somewhat let down the wig, by taking it from the heads of bishops and priests, and in ordering churchmen to let their hair grow.

Lord David, then, did not wear a wig, and did wear cowhide boots. Such great things made him a mark for public admiration. There was not a club of which he was not the leader, not a boxing match in which he was not desired as referee. The referee is the arbitrator.

He had drawn up the rules of several clubs in high life. He founded several resorts of fashionable society, of which one, the Lady Guinea, was still in existence in Pall Mall, in 1772. The Lady Guinea was a club in which all the youth of the peerage congregated. They gamed there. The lowest stake allowed was a rouleau of fifty guineas, and there was never less than 20,000 guineas on the table. By the side of each player was a little stand, on which to place his cup of tea, and a gilt bowl in which to put the rouleaux of guineas. The players, like servants when cleaning knives, wore leather sleeves to save their lace, breast-plates of leather to protect their ruffles, shades on their brows to shelter their eyes from the great glare of the lamps, and, to keep their curls in order, broad-brimmed hats covered with flowers. They were masked to conceal their excitement, especially when playing the game of *quinze*. All, moreover, had their coats turned the wrong way, for luck.

Lord David was a member of the Beefsteak Club, the Surly Club, and of the Splitfarthing Club, of the Cross Club, the Scratchpenny

Club, of the Sealed Knot, a Royalist Club, and of the Martinus Scriblerus, founded by Swift, to take the place of the Rota, founded by Milton.

Though handsome, he belonged to the Ugly Club. This club was dedicated to deformity. The members agreed to fight, not about a beautiful woman, but about an ugly man. The hall of the club was adorned by hideous portraits—Thersites, Triboulet, Duns, Hudibras, Scarron; over the chimney was Æsop, between two men, each blind of an eye, Cocles and Camoëns (Cocles being blind of the left, Camoëns of the right eye), so arranged that the two profiles without eyes were turned to each other. The day that the beautiful Mrs. Visart caught the small-pox, the Ugly Club toasted her. This club was still in existence in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Mirabeau was elected an honorary member.

Since the restoration of Charles II., revolutionary clubs had been abolished. The tavern in the little street by Moorfields where the Calf's Head Club was held, had been pulled down; it was so called because on the 30th of January, the day on which the blood of Charles I. flowed on the scaffold, the members had drunk red wine out of the skull of a calf to the health of Cromwell. To the republican clubs had succeeded monarchical clubs. In them people amused themselves with decency.

There was the Hell-fire Club, where they played at being impious. It was a joust of sacrilege. Hell was at auction there to the highest bidder in blasphemy.

There was the Butting Club, so called from its members butting folks with their heads. They found some street porter with a wide chest and a stupid countenance. They offered him, and compelled him, if necessary, to accept a pot of porter, in return for which he was to allow them to butt him with their heads four times in the chest, and on this they betted. One day a man, a great brute of a Welshman named Gogangerdd, expired at the third butt. This looked serious. An inquest was held, and the jury returned the following verdict: "Died of an inflation of the heart, caused by excessive drinking." Gogangerdd had certainly drunk the contents of the pot of porter.

There was the Fun Club. *Fun* is like *cant*, like *humor*, a word which is untranslatable. Fun is to farce what pepper is to salt. To get into a house and break a valuable mirror, slash the family portraits, poison the dog, put the cat in the aviary, is called "having a bit of fun." To give bad news which is untrue, whereby people put on mourning by mistake, is fun. It was fun to cut a square hole in the Holbein at Hampton Court. Fun would have been proud to have broken the arm of the Venus of Milo. Under James II. a young millionaire lord

who had during the night set fire to a thatched cottage, a feat which made all London burst with laughter, was proclaimed the King of Fun. The poor devils in the cottage were saved in their night clothes. The members of the Fun Club, all of the highest aristocracy, used to run about London during the hours when the citizens were asleep, pulling



the hinges from the shutters, cutting off the pipes of pumps, filling up cisterns, digging up cultivated plots of ground, putting out lamps, sawing through the beams which supported houses, breaking the window panes, especially in the poor quarters of the town. It was the rich who acted thus towards the poor. For this reason no complaint was possible. That was the best of the joke. These manners have not alto-

gether disappeared. In many places in England and in English possessions—at Guernsey, for instance—your house is now and then somewhat damaged during the night, or a fence is broken, or the knocker twisted off your door. If it were poor people who did these things, they would be sent to jail; but they are done by pleasant young gentlemen.

The most fashionable of the clubs was presided over by an emperor, who wore a crescent on his forehead, and was called the Grand Mohawk. The Mohawk surpassed the Fun. Do evil for evil's sake was the programme. The Mohawk Club had one great object,—to injure. To fulfill this duty, all means were held good. In becoming a Mohawk, the members took an oath to be hurtful. To injure at any price, no matter when, no matter whom, no matter where, was a matter of duty. Every member of the Mohawk Club was bound to possess an accomplishment. One was "a dancing master;" that is to say, he made the rustics frisk about by pricking the calves of their legs with the point of his sword. Others knew how to make a man sweat; that is to say, a circle of gentlemen with drawn rapiers would surround a poor wretch, so that it was impossible for him not to turn his back upon some one. The gentleman behind him chastised him for this by a prick of his sword, which made him spring round; another prick in the back warned the fellow that one of noble blood was behind him, and so on, each one wounding him in his turn. When the man closed round by the circle of swords and covered with blood, had turned and danced about enough, they ordered their servants to beat him with sticks, to change the course of his ideas. Others "hit the lion;" that is, they gayly stopped a passenger, broke his nose with a blow of the fist, and then shoved both thumbs into his eyes. If his eyes were gouged out, he was paid for them.

Such were, towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, the pastimes of the rich idlers of London. The idlers of Paris had theirs. M. de Charolais was firing his gun at a citizen standing on his own threshold. In all times youth has had its amusements.

Lord David Dirry-Moir brought into all these institutions his magnificent and liberal spirit. Just like any one else he would gayly set fire to a cot of woodwork and thatch, and just scorch those within; but he would rebuild their houses in stone. He insulted two ladies. One was unmarried: he gave her a portion; the other was married: he had her husband appointed chaplain.

Cock-fighting owed him some praiseworthy improvements. It was marvelous to see Lord David dress a cock for the pit. Cocks lay hold of each other by the feathers, as men by the hair. Lord David, therefore, made his cock as bald as possible. With a pair of scissors he cut

off all the feathers from the tail and from the head to the shoulders, and all those on the neck. So much less for the enemy's beak, he used to say. Then he extended the cock's wings, and cut each feather, one after another, to a point, and thus the wings were furnished with darts. So much for the enemy's eyes, he would say. Then he scraped its claws with a penknife, sharpened its nails, fitted on its spur a gaff of sharp steel, spat on its head, spat on its neck, anointed it with spittle, as they used to rub oil over athletes; then set it down in the pit, a redoubtable champion, exclaiming, "That's how to make a cock an eagle, and a bird of the poultry-yard a bird of the mountain."

Lord David attended prize-fights, and was their living law. On occasions of great performances it was he who had the stakes driven in and ropes stretched, and who fixed the number of feet for the ring. When he was a second, he followed his man step by step, a bottle in one hand, a sponge in the other, crying out to him to *strike fair*, suggesting stratagems, advising him as he fought, wiping away the blood, raising him when overthrown, placing him on his knee, putting the mouth of the bottle between his teeth, and from his own mouth, filled with water, blowing a fine rain into his eyes and ears, a thing which reanimates even a dying man. If he was referee, he saw that there was no foul play, prevented any one, whosoever he might be, from assisting the combatants, excepting the seconds, declared the man beaten who did not fairly face his opponent, watched that the time between the rounds did not exceed half a minute, prevented butting, and declared whoever resorted to it beaten, and forbade a man's being hit when down. All this science, however, did not render him a pedant, nor destroy his ease of manner in society.

When he was referee, rough, pimple-faced, unshorn friends of either combatant never dared to come to the aid of their failing man, nor in order to upset the chances of the betting, jumped over the barrier, entered the ring, broke the ropes, pulled down the stakes, and violently interposed in the battle. Lord David was one of the few referees whom they dared not thrash.

No one could train like him. The pugilist whose trainer he consented to become was sure to win. Lord David would choose a Hercules—massive as a rock, tall as a tower—and make him his child. The problem was to turn that human rock from a defensive to an offensive state. In this he excelled. Having once adopted the Cyclops, he never left him. He became his nurse; he measured out his wine; weighed his meat, and counted his hours of sleep. It was he who invented the athlete's admirable rules, afterwards reproduced by Morely. In the mornings a raw egg and a glass of sherry; at twelve, some slices of a leg

of mutton, almost raw, with tea; at four, toast and tea; in the evening, pale ale and toast; after which he undressed his man, rubbed him, and put him to bed. In the street, he never allowed him to leave his sight, keeping him out of every danger, runaway horses, the wheels of carriages, drunken soldiers, pretty girls. He watched over his virtue. This maternal solicitude continually brought some new perfection into the pupil's education. He taught him the blow with the fist which breaks the teeth, and the twist of the thumb which gouges out the eye. What could be more touching?

Thus he was preparing himself for public life to which he was to be called later on. It is no easy matter to become an accomplished gentleman.

Lord David Dirry-Moir was passionately fond of open-air exhibitions, of shows, of circuses with wild beasts, of the caravans of mountebanks, of clowns, tumblers, merrymen, open-air farces, and the wonders of a fair. The true noble is he who smacks of the people. Therefore it was that Lord David frequented the taverns and low haunts of London and the Cinque Ports. In order to be able at need, and without compromising his rank in the white squadron, to be cheek-by-jowl with a topman or a calker, he used to wear a sailor's jacket when he went into the slums. For such disguise his not wearing a wig was convenient; for even under Louis XIV. the people kept to their hair like the lion to his mane. This gave him great freedom of action. The low people whom Lord David used to meet in the stews, and with whom he mixed, held him in high esteem, without ever dreaming that he was a lord. They called him Tom-Jim-Jack. Under this name he was famous and very popular amongst the dregs of the people. He played the blackguard in a masterly style; when necessary, he used his fists. This phase of his fashionable life was highly appreciated by Lady Josiana.

CHAPTER V

QUEEN ANNE

I

ABOVE this couple there was Anne, Queen of England. An ordinary woman was Queen Anne. She was gay, kindly, august—to a certain extent. No quality of hers attained to virtue, none to vice. Her stoutness was bloated; her fun, heavy; her good-nature, stupid. She was stubborn and weak. As a wife, she was faithless and faithful, having favorites to whom she gave up her heart, and a husband for whom she kept her bed. As a Christian, she was a heretic and a bigot. She had one beauty—the well-developed neck of a Niobe. The rest of her person was indifferently formed. She was a clumsy coquette, and a chaste one. Her skin was white and fine; she displayed a great deal of it. It was she who introduced the fashion of necklaces of large pearls clapsed round the throat. She had a narrow forehead, sensual lips, fleshy cheeks, large eyes, short sight. Her short sight extended to her mind. Beyond a burst of merriment now and then, almost as ponderous as her anger, she lived in a sort of taciturn grumble and a grumbling silence. Words escaped from her which had to be guessed at. She was a mixture of a good woman and a mischievous devil. She liked surprises, which is extremely woman-like. Anne was a pattern—just sketched roughly—of the universal Eve. To that sketch had fallen that chance, the throne. She drank. Her husband was a Dane, thorough-bred.

A Tory, she governed by the Whigs; like a woman, like a mad woman. She had fits of rage. She was violent, a brawler. Nobody more awkward than Anne in directing affairs of state. She allowed events to fall about as they might chance. Her whole policy was cracked. She excelled in bringing about great catastrophes from little causes. When a whim of authority took hold of her, she called it giving

a stir with the poker. She would say with an air of profound thought, "No peer may keep his hat on before the king except De Courcy, Baron Kingsale, an Irish peer." Or, "It would be an injustice were my husband not to be Lord High Admiral, since my father was." And she made George of Denmark High Admiral of England and of all her majesty's plantations. She was perpetually perspiring bad humor; she did not explain her thought, she exuded it. There was something of the Sphinx in this goose.

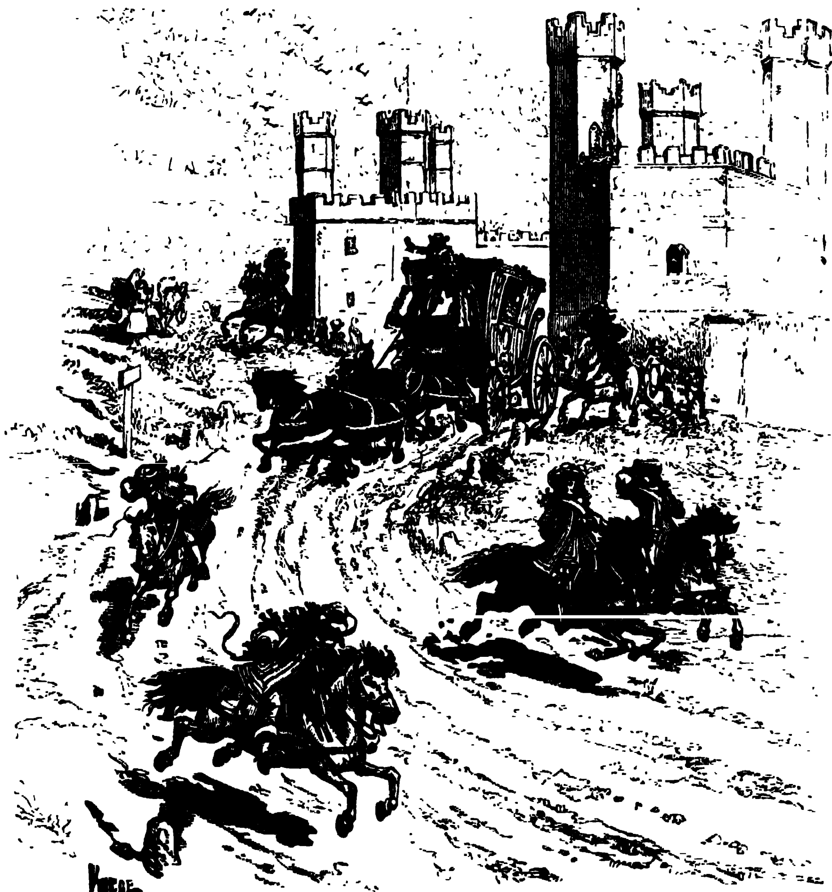
She rather liked fun, teasing, and practical jokes. Could she have made Apollo a hunchback, it would have delighted her. But she would have left him a god. Good-natured, her ideal was to allow none to despair, and to worry all. She had often a rough word in her mouth; a little more, and she would have sworn like Elizabeth. From time to time she would take from a man's pocket, which she wore in her skirt, a little round box, of chased silver, on which was her portrait, in profile, between the two letters Q. A.; she would open this box, and take from it, on her finger, a little pomade, with which she reddened her lips; and, having colored her mouth, would laugh. She was greedily fond of the flat Zealand ginger-bread cakes. She was proud of being fat.

More of a Puritan than anything else, she would, nevertheless, have liked to devote herself to stage plays. She had an absurd academy of music, copied after that of France. In 1700 a Frenchman, named Forteroche, wanted to build a royal circus at Paris, at a cost of 400,000 francs, which scheme was opposed by D'Argenson. This Forteroche passed into England, and proposed to Queen Anne, who was immediately charmed by the idea, to build in London a theatre with machinery, with a *fourth mezzanine*, finer than that of the King of France. Like Louis XIV., she liked to be driven at a gallop. Her teams and relays would sometimes do the distance between London and Windsor in less than an hour and a quarter.

II

In Anne's time, no meeting was allowed without the permission of two justices of the peace. The assembly of twelve persons, were it only to eat oysters and drink porter, was a felony. Under her reign, otherwise relatively mild, pressing for the fleet was carried on with extreme violence: a gloomy evidence that the Englishman is a subject rather than a citizen. For centuries England suffered under that process of tyranny which gave the lie to all the old charters of freedom, and out of which France especially gathered a cause of triumph and indignation. What in some degree diminishes the triumph is, that while sailors were

pressed in England, soldiers were pressed in France. In every great town of France, any able-bodied man, going through the streets on his business, was liable to be shoved by the crimps into a house called the *oven.* There he was shut up with others in the same plight, those fit for



service were picked out, and the recruiters sold them to the officers. In 1695, there were thirty of these ovens in Paris.

The laws against Ireland, emanating from Queen Anne, were atrocious. Anne was born in 1664, two years before the great fire of London, on which the astrologers (there were some left, and Louis XIV. was born with the assistance of an astrologer, and swaddled in a horo-

scope) predicted that being the elder sister of fire, she would be queen. And so she was, thanks to astrology and the revolution of 1688. She had the humiliation of having only Gilbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, for god-father. To be god-child of the Pope was no longer possible in England. A mere primate is but a poor sort of god-father. Anne had to put up with one, however. It was her own fault. Why was she a Protestant?

Denmark had paid for her virginity (*virginitas empta*, as the old charters expressed it) by a dowry of 6,250*l.* a year, secured on the bailiwick of Wardinburg and the island of Fehmarn. Anne followed, without conviction, and by routine, the traditions of William. The English under that royalty born of a revolution, possessed as much liberty as they could lay hands on between the Tower of London, into which they put orators, and the pillory, into which they put writers. Anne spoke a little Danish in her private chats with her husband, and a little French in her private chats with Bolingbroke. Wretched gibberish; but the height of English fashion, especially at Court, was to talk French. There was never a *bon mot* but in French. Anne paid a deal of attention to her coins, especially to copper coins, which are the low and popular ones; she wanted to cut a great figure on them. Six farthings were struck during her reign. On the back of the first three she had merely a throne struck; on the back of the fourth she ordered a triumphal chariot, and on the back of the sixth a goddess holding a sword in one hand and an olive branch in the other, with the scroll, *Bello et pace*. Her father, James II., was candid and cruel; she was brutal.

At the same time she was mild at bottom. A contradiction which only appears such. A fit of anger metamorphosed her. Heat sugar and it will boil.

Anne was popular. England likes feminine rulers. Why? France excludes them. There is a reason at once. Perhaps there is no other. With English historians Elizabeth embodies grandeur, Anne, good-nature. As they will. Be it so. But there is nothing delicate in the reigns of these women. The lines are heavy. It is gross grandeur and gross good-nature. As to their immaculate virtue, England is tenacious of it, and we are not going to oppose the idea. Elizabeth was a virgin tempered by Essex; Anne, a wife complicated by Bolingbroke.

III

ONE idiotic habit of the people is to attribute to the king what they do themselves. They fight. Whose the glory? The king's. They pay.

Whose the generosity? The king's. Then the people love him for being so rich. The king receives a crown from the poor, and returns them a farthing. How generous he is! The colossus which is the pedestal contemplates the pigmy which is the statue. How great is this myrmidon! he is on my back. A dwarf has an excellent way of being taller than a giant; it is to perch himself on his shoulders. But that the giant should allow it, there is the wonder—and that he should admire the height of the dwarf, there is the folly. Simplicity of mankind!

The equestrian statue, reserved for kings alone, is an excellent figure of royalty: the horse is the people. Only that the horse becomes transfigured by degrees. It begins in an ass; it ends in a lion. Then it throws its rider, and you have 1642 in England and 1789 in France; and sometimes it devours him, and you have in England 1649, and in France 1793.

That the lion should relapse into the donkey is astonishing; but it is so. This was occurring in England. It had resumed the pack-saddle, idolatry of the crown. Queen Anne, as we have just observed, was popular. What was she doing to be so? Nothing. Nothing!—that is all that is asked of the sovereign of England. He receives for that nothing 1,250,000*l.* a year. In 1705, England, which had had but thirteen men-of-war under Elizabeth, and thirty-six under James I., counted a hundred and fifty in her fleet. The English had three armies, five thousand men in Catalonia; ten thousand in Portugal; fifty thousand in Flanders; and besides, was paying 1,666,666*l.* a year to monarchical and diplomatic Europe, a sort of prostitute the English people has always had in keeping. Parliament having voted a patriotic loan of thirty-four million francs of annuities, there had been a crush at the exchequer to subscribe it. England was sending a squadron to the East Indies, and a squadron to the West of Spain under Admiral Leake, without mentioning the reserve of four hundred sail, under Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel. England had lately annexed Scotland. It was the interval between Hochstadt and Ramilies, and the first of these victories was foretelling the second. England, in its cast of the net at Hochstadt, had made prisoners of twenty-seven battalions and four regiments of dragoons, and deprived France of one hundred leagues of country—France drawing back dismayed from the Danube to the Rhine. England was stretching her hand out towards Sardinia and the Balearic Islands. She was bringing into her ports in triumph ten Spanish line-of-battle ships, and many a galleon laden with gold. Hudson's Bay and Straits were already half given over by Louis XIV. It was felt that he was about to give up his hold over Acadia, St. Christopher's, and Newfoundland, and that he would be but too happy if

England would only tolerate the King of France, fishing for cod at Cape Breton. England was about to impose upon him the shame of demolishing himself the fortifications of Dunkirk. Meanwhile, she had taken Gibraltar, and was taking Barcelona. What great things accomplished! How was it possible to refuse Anne admiration for taking the trouble of living at the period?

From a certain point of view, the reign of Anne appears a reflection of the reign of Louis XIV. Anne, for a moment even with that king in the race which is called history, bears to him the vague resemblance of a reflection. Like him, she plays at a great reign; she has her monuments, her arts, her victories, her captains, her men of letters, her privy purse to pension celebrities, her gallery of chefs-d'œuvre, side by side with those of his majesty. Her court, too, was a cortége, with the features of a triumph, an order and a march. It was a miniature copy of all the great men of Versailles, not giants themselves. In it there is enough to deceive the eye; add *God save the Queen*, which might have been taken from Lulli, and the ensemble becomes an illusion. Not a personage is missing. Christopher Wren is a very passable Mansard; Somers is as good as Lamoignon; Anne has a Racine in Dryden, a Boileau in Pope, a Colbert in Godolphin, a Louvois in Pembroke, and a Turenne in Marlborough. Heighten the wigs and lower the foreheads. The whole is solemn and pompous, and the Windsor of the time has a faded resemblance to Marly. Still the whole was effeminate, and Anne's Père Tellier was called Sarah Jennings. However, there is an outline of incipient irony, which fifty years later was to turn to philosophy, in the literature of the age, and the Protestant Tartuffe is unmasked by Swift just in the same way as the Catholic Tartuffe is denounced by Molière. Although the England of the period quarrels and fights France, she imitates her and draws enlightenment from her; and the light on the façade of England is French light. It is a pity that Anne's reign lasted but twelve years, or the English would not hesitate to call it the century of Anne, as we say the century of Louis XIV. Anne appeared in 1702, as Louis XIV. declined. It is one of the curiosities of history, that the rise of that pale planet coincides with the setting of the planet of purple, and that at the moment in which France had the king Sun, England should have had the queen Moon.

A detail to be noted. Louis XIV., although they made war with him, was greatly admired in England. "He is the kind of king they want in France," said the English. The love of the English for their own liberty is mingled with a certain acceptance of servitude for others. That favorable regard of the chains which bind their neighbors, sometimes attains to enthusiasm for the despot next door.



QUEEN ANNE.

To sum up, Anne rendered her people *heureux*, as the French translator of Beeverell's book repeats three times, with graceful reiteration at the sixth and ninth page of his dedication, and the third of his preface.

IV

Queen Anne bore a little grudge to the Duchess Josiana, for two reasons. Firstly, because she thought the Duchess Josiana handsome. Secondly, because she thought the Duchess Josiana's betrothed handsome.

Two reasons for jealousy are sufficient for a woman. One is sufficient for a queen.

Let us add that she bore her a grudge for being her sister.

Anne did not like women to be pretty. She considered it against good morals.

As for herself, she was ugly. Not from choice, however. A part of her religion she derived from that ugliness.

Josiana, beautiful and philosophical, was a cause of vexation to the queen. To an ugly queen, a pretty duchess is not an agreeable sister.

There was another grievance, Josiana's "improper" birth.

Anne was the daughter of Anne Hyde, a simple gentlewoman, legitimately, but vexatiously, married by James II. when Duke of York. Anne, having this inferior blood in her veins, felt herself but half royal, and Josiana, having come into the world quite irregularly, drew closer attention to the incorrectness, less great, but really existing, in the birth of the queen. The daughter of *mésalliance* looked without love upon the daughter of bastardy, so near her. It was an unpleasant resemblance. Josiana had a right to say to Anne, "My mother was at least as good as yours." At court no one said so, but they evidently thought it. This was a bore for Her Royal Majesty. Why this Josiana? What had put it into her head to be born? What good was a Josiana? Certain relationships are detrimental.

Nevertheless, Anne smiled on Josiana.

Perhaps she might even have liked her, had she not been her sister.

CHAPTER VI

BARKILPHEDRO

T is useful to know what people do, and a certain surveillance is wise.

Josiana had Lord David watched by a little creature of hers, in whom she reposed confidence, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

Lord David had Josiana discreetly observed by a creature of his, of whom he was sure, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

Queen Anne, on her part, kept herself secretly informed of the actions and conduct of the Duchess Josiana, her bastard sister, and of Lord David, her future brother-in-law by the left hand, by a creature of hers, on whom she counted fully, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

This Barkilphedro had his fingers on that key-board—Josiana, Lord David, the queen. A man between two women. What modulations possible! What amalgamation of souls!

Barkilphedro had not always held the magnificent position of whispering into three ears.

He was an old servant of the Duke of York. He had tried to be a churchman, but had failed. The Duke of York, an English and a Roman prince, compounded of royal Popery and legal Anglicanism, had his Catholic household and his Protestant household, and might have pushed Barkilphedro in one or the other hierarchy; but he did not judge him to be Catholic enough to make him almoner, or Protestant enough to make him chaplain. So that between two religions, Barkilphedro found himself with his soul on the ground.

Not a bad posture, either, for certain reptile souls.

Certain ways are impracticable, except by crawling flat on the belly.

An obscure but fattening servitude had long made up Barkilphe-

dro's whole existence. Service is something; but he wanted power besides. He was, perhaps, about to reach it when James II. fell. He had to begin all over again. Nothing to do under William III., a sullen prince, and exercising in his mode of reigning a prudery which he be-



lieved to be probity. Barkilphedro, when his protector, James II., was dethroned, did not lapse all at once into rags. There is a something which survives deposed princes, and which feeds and sustains their parasites. The remains of the exhaustible sap causes leaves to live on for two or three days on the branches of the uprooted tree; then, all at once, the leaf yellows and dries up: and thus it is with the courtier.

Thanks to that embalming which is called legitimacy, the prince himself, although fallen and cast away, lasts and keeps preserved; it is not so with the courtier, much more dead than the king. The king, beyond there, is a mummy; the courtier, here, is a phantom. To be the shadow of a shadow, is leanness indeed. Hence Barkilphedro became famished. Then he took up the character of a man of letters.

But he was thrust back even from the kitchens. Sometimes he knew not where to sleep. "Who will give me shelter?" he would ask. He struggled on. All that is interesting in patience in distress he possessed. He had, besides, the talent of the termite—knowing how to bore a hole from the bottom to the top. By dint of making use of the name of James II., of old memories, of fables of fidelity, of touching stories, he pierced as far as the Duchess Josiana's heart.

Josiana took a liking to this man of poverty and wit, an interesting combination. She presented him to Lord Dirry-Moir, gave him a shelter in the servants' hall among her domestics, retained him in her household, was kind to him, and sometimes even spoke to him. Barkilphedro felt neither hunger nor cold again. Josiana addressed him in the second person; it was the fashion for great ladies to do so to men of letters, who allowed it. The Marquise de Mailly received Roy, whom she had never seen before, in bed, and said to him: "*C'est toi qui as fait l'Année galante! Bonjour.*" Later on the men of letters returned the custom. The day came when Fabre d'Eglantine said to the Duchesse de Rohan:

"*N'est-tu pas la Chabot?*"

For Barkilphedro to be "thee'd" and "thou'd" was a success; he was overjoyed by it. He had aspired to this contemptuous familiarity.

"Lady Josiana thees-and-thous me," he would say to himself. And he would rub his hands.

He profited by this theeing-and-thouing to make further way. He became a sort of constant attendant in Josiana's private rooms; in no way troublesome; unperceived; the duchess would almost have changed her shift before him. All this, however, was precarious. Barkilphedro was aiming at a position. A duchess was half-way; an underground passage which did not lead to the queen was having bored for nothing.

One day Barkilphedro said to Josiana:

"Would your Grace like to make my fortune?"

"What dost thou want?"

"An appointment."

"An appointment? for thee?"

"Yes, madam."

"What an idea! *thou* to ask for an appointment! thou, who art good for nothing."

"That's just the reason."

Josiana burst out laughing.

"Among the offices to which thou art unsuited, which dost thou desire?"

"That of cork-drawer of the bottles of the ocean."

Josiana's laughter redoubled.

"What meanest thou? Thou art fooling."

"No, madam."

"To amuse myself, I shall answer you seriously," said the duchess. "What dost thou wish to be? Repeat it."

"Uncorker of the bottles of the ocean."

"Everything is possible at court. Is there an appointment of that kind?"

"Yes, madam."

"This is news to me. Go on."

"There is such an appointment."

"Swear it on the soul which thou dost not possess."

"I swear it."

"I do not believe thee."

"Thank you, madam."

"Then thou wishest?—Begin again."

"To uncork the bottles of the ocean."

"That is a situation which can give little trouble. It is like grooming a bronze horse."

"Very nearly."

"Nothing to do. Well, 'tis a situation to suit thee. Thou art good for that much."

"You see I am good for something."

"Come! thou art talking nonsense. Is there such an appointment?"

Barkilphedro assumed an attitude of deferential gravity.

"Madam, you had an august father, James II., the king, and you have an illustrious brother-in-law, George of Denmark, Duke of Cumberland; your father was, and your brother is, Lord High Admiral of England——"

"Is what thou tellest me fresh news? I know all that as well as thou?"

"But here is what your Grace does not know. In the sea there are three kinds of things: those at the bottom, *lagan*: those which float, *flotsam*; those which the sea throws up on the shore, *jetsam*."

"And then?"

"These three things—*lagan*, *flotsam*, and *jetsam*—belong to the Lord High Admiral."

"And then?"

"Your Grace understands."

"No."

"All that is in the sea, all that sinks, all that floats, all that is cast ashore—all belongs to the Admiral of England."

"Everything! Really? And then?"

"Except the sturgeon, which belongs to the king."

"I should have thought," said Josiana, "all that would have belonged to Neptune."

"Neptune is a fool. He has given up everything. He has allowed the English to take everything."

"Finish what thou wert saying."

"'Prizes of the sea' is the name given to such *treasure trove*."

"Be it so."

"It is boundless: there is always something floating, something being cast up. It is the contribution of the sea—the tax which the ocean pays to England."

"With all my heart. But pray conclude."

"Your Grace understands that in this way the ocean creates a department."

"Where?"

"At the Admiralty."

"What department?"

"The Sea Prize Department."

"Well?"

"The department is subdivided into three offices—Lagan, Flotsam, and Jetsam—and in each there is an officer."

"And then?"

"A ship at sea writes to give notice on any subject to those on land; that it is sailing in such a latitude—that it has met a sea monster—that it is in sight of shore—that it is in distress—that it is about to founder—that it is lost, etc. The captain takes a bottle, puts into it a bit of paper on which he has written the information, corks up the flask, and casts it into the sea. If the bottle goes to the bottom, it is in the department of the lagan officer; if it floats, it is in the department of the flotsam officer; if it be thrown upon shore, it concerns the jetsam officer."

"And wouldst thou like to be the jetsam officer?"

"Precisely so."

"And that is what thou callest uncorking the bottles of the ocean?"

"Since there is such an appointment."

"Why dost thou wish for the last-named place in preference to both the others?"

"Because it is vacant just now."

"In what does the appointment consist?"

"Madam, in 1598 a tarred bottle, picked up by a man, conger-fishing on the strand of Epidium Promontorium, was brought to Queen Elizabeth; and a parchment drawn out of it, gave information to England that Holland had taken, without saying anything about it, an unknown country, Nova Zembla; that the capture had taken place in June, 1596; that in that country people were eaten by bears; and that the manner of passing the winter was described on a paper inclosed in a musket-case hanging in the chimney of the wooden house built in the island, and left by the Dutchmen, who were all dead: and that the chimney was built of a barrel with the end knocked out, sunk into the roof."

"I don't understand much of thy rigmarole."

"Be it so. Elizabeth understood. A country the more for Holland was a country the less for England. The bottle which had given the information was held to be of importance; and thenceforward an order was issued that anybody who should find a sealed bottle on the sea-shore should take it to the Lord High Admiral of England, under pain of the gallows. The Admiral entrusts the opening of such bottles to an officer, who presents the contents to the Queen, if there be reason for so doing."

"Are many such bottles brought to the Admiralty?"

"But few. But it's all the same. The appointment exists. There is for the office a room and lodgings at the Admiralty."

"And for that way of doing nothing, how is one paid?"

"One hundred guineas a year."

"And thou wouldst trouble me for that much?"

"It is enough to live upon."

"Like a beggar."

"As it becomes one of my sort."

"One hundred guineas! It's a bagatelle."

"What keeps you for a minute, keeps us for a year. That's the advantage of the poor."

"Thou shalt have the place."

A week afterwards, thanks to Josiana's exertions, thanks to the influence of Lord David Dirry-Moir, Barkilphedro—safe thenceforward, drawn out of his precarious existence, lodged, and boarded, with a salary of a hundred guineas—was installed at the Admiralty.

CHAPTER VII

BARKILPHEDRO GNAWS HIS WAY



HERE is one thing the most pressing of all: to be ungrateful.

Barkilphedro was not wanting therein.

Having received so many benefits from Josiana, he had naturally but one thought,—to revenge himself on her.

When we add that Josiana was beautiful, great, young, rich, powerful, illustrious, while Barkilphedro was ugly, little, old, poor, dependent, obscure, he must necessarily revenge himself for all this as well.

When a man is made out of night, how is he to forgive so many beams of light?

Barkilphedro was an Irishman who had denied Ireland—a bad species.

Barkilphedro had but one thing in his favor,—that he had a very big belly. A big belly passes for a sign of kind-heartedness. But his belly was but an addition to Barkilphedro's hypocrisy; for the man was full of malice.

What was Barkilphedro's age? None. The age necessary for his project of the moment. He was old in his wrinkles and gray hairs, young in the activity of his mind. He was active and ponderous; a sort of hippopotamus-monkey. A royalist, certainly; a republican—who knows? a Catholic, perhaps; a Protestant, without doubt. For Stuart, probably; for Brunswick, evidently. To be For, is a power only on the condition of being at the same time Against. Barkilphedro practiced this wisdom.

The appointment of drawer of the bottles of the ocean was not as absurd as Barkilphedro had appeared to make out. The complaints, which would in these times be termed declamations, of Garcia Fernandez in his "Chart-Book of the Sea," against the robbery of jetsam, called right of wreck, and against the pillage of wreck by the inhabitants

of the coast, had created a sensation in England, and had obtained for the shipwrecked this reform—that their goods, chattels, and property, instead of being stolen by the country-people, were confiscated by the Lord High Admiral. All the *débris* of the sea cast upon the English shore—merchandise, broken hulls of ships, bales, chests, etc.—belonged to the Lord High Admiral; but—and here was revealed the importance of the place asked for by Barkilphedro—the floating receptacles containing messages and declarations awakened particularly the attention of the Admiralty. Shipwrecks are one of England's gravest cares. Navigation being her life, shipwreck is her anxiety. England is kept in perpetual care by the sea. The little glass bottle thrown to the waves by the doomed ship, contains final intelligence, precious from every point of view. Intelligence concerning the ship, intelligence concerning the crew, intelligence concerning the place, the time, the manner of loss, intelligence concerning the winds which have broken up the vessel, intelligence concerning the currents which bore the floating flask ashore. The situation filled by Barkilphedro has been abolished more than a century, but it had its real utility. The last holder was William Hussey, of Doddington, in Lincolnshire. The man who held it was a sort of guardian of the things of the sea. All the closed and sealed-up vessels, bottles, flasks, jars, thrown upon the English coast by the tide, were brought to him. He alone had the right to open them; he was first in the secrets of their contents; he put them in order, and ticketed them with his signature. The expression "*loger un papier au greffe*," still used in the Channel Islands, is thence derived. However, one precaution was certainly taken. Not one of these bottles could be unsealed except in the presence of two jurors of the Admiralty sworn to secrecy, who signed, conjointly with the holder of the jetsam office, the official report of the opening. But these jurors being held to secrecy, there resulted for Barkilphedro a certain discretionary latitude; it depended upon him, to a certain extent, to suppress a fact or bring it to light.

These fragile floating messages were far from being what Barkilphedro had told Josiana, rare and insignificant. Sometimes they reached land with little delay; at others, after many years. That depended on the winds and the currents. The fashion of casting bottles on the surface of the sea has somewhat passed away, like that of vowing offerings, but in those religious times, those who were about to die were glad thus to send their last thought to God and to men, and at times these messages from the sea were plentiful at the Admiralty. A parchment preserved in the hall at Audlyene (ancient spelling), with notes by the Earl of Suffolk, Grand Treasurer of England under James I., bears witness that in the one year, 1615, fifty-two flasks, bladders, and tarred vessels,

containing mention of sinking ships, were brought and registered in the records of the Lord High Admiral.

Court appointments are the drop of oil in the widow's cruse, they ever increase. Thus it is that the porter has become chancellor, and the groom, constable. The special officer charged with the appointment desired and obtained by Barkilphedro, was invariably a confidential man. Elizabeth had wished that it should be so. At court, to speak of confidence is to speak of intrigue, and to speak of intrigue is to speak of advancement. This functionary had come to be a personage of some consideration. He was a clerk, and ranked directly after the two grooms of the almonry. He had the right of entrance into the palace, but we must add, what was called the humble entrance—*humilis introïtus*—and even into the bed-chamber. For it was the custom that he should inform the monarch, on occasions of sufficient importance, of the objects found, which were often very curious: the wills of men in despair—farewells cast to fatherland, revelations of falsified logs, bills of lading, and crimes committed at sea, legacies to the crown, etc., that he should maintain his records in communication with the court, and should account, from time to time, to the king or queen, concerning the opening of these ill-omened bottles. It was the *Black Cabinet* of the ocean.

Elizabeth, who was always glad of an opportunity of speaking Latin, used to ask Tonfield, of Coley in Berkshire, jetsam officer of her ayd, when he brought her one of these papers cast up by the sea—"Quid mihi scribit Neptunus?" (What does Neptune write me?)

The way had been eaten, the insect had succeeded. Barkilphedro approached the queen.

This was all he wanted.

To make his fortune?

No.

To unmake that of others?

A greater happiness.

To hurt is to enjoy.

To have within one the desire of injuring, vague but implacable, and never to lose sight of it, is not given to all.

Barkilphedro possessed that fixity of intention.

As the bulldog holds on with his jaws, so did his thought.

To feel himself inexorable gave him a depth of gloomy satisfaction. As long as he had a prey under his teeth, or in his soul, a certainty of evil-doing, he wanted nothing.

He was happy, shivering in the cold which his neighbor was suffering. To be malignant is an opulence. Such a man is believed to be poor, and, in truth, is so; but he has all his riches in malice, and prefers



BARKILPHEDRO.

having them so. Everything is in what contents one. To do a bad turn, which is the same as a good turn, is better than money. Bad for him who endures, good for him who does it. Catesby, the colleague of Guy Fawkes, in the Popish powder plot, said: "*To see parliament blown upside down, I wouldn't miss it for a million sterling.*"

What was Barkilphedro? That meanest and most terrible of things—an envious man.

Envy is a thing ever easily placed at court.

Courts abound in impertinent people, in idlers, in rich loungers hungering for gossip, in those who seek for needles in trusses of hay, in triflers, in banterers bantered, in witty ninnies, who cannot do without converse with an envious man.

What a refreshing thing is the evil spoken to you of others.

Envy is good stuff to make a spy. There is a profound analogy between that natural passion, envy, and that social function, espionage. The spy hunts on other's account, like the dog. The envious man hunts on his own, like the cat.

A fierce I, such is the envious man.

He had other qualities. Barkilphedro was discreet, secret, concrete. He kept in everything and racked himself with his hate. Enormous baseness implies enormous vanity. He was liked by those whom he amused, and hated by all others; but he felt that he was disdained by those who hated him, and despised by those who liked him. He restrained himself. All his gall simmered noiselessly in his hostile resignation. He was indignant, as if rogues had the right to be so. He was the furies' silent prey. To swallow everything was his talent. There were deaf wraths within him, frenzies of interior rage, black and brooding flames unseen; he was a *smoke-consuming* man of passion. The surface was smiling. He was kind, prompt, easy, amiable, obliging. Never mind to whom, never mind where, he bowed. For a breath of wind he inclined to the earth. What a source of fortune to have a reed for a spine!

Such concealed and venomous beings are not so rare as is believed. We live surrounded by ill-omened crawling things. Wherefore the malevolent? A keen question! The dreamer constantly proposes it to himself, and the thinker never resolves it. Hence the sad eye of the philosophers ever fixed upon that mountain of darkness which is destiny, and from the top of which the colossal spectre of evil casts handfuls of serpents over the earth.

Barkilphedro's body was obese, and his face lean. A fat bust and a bony countenance. His nails were channeled and short, his fingers knotted, his thumbs flat, his hair coarse, his temples wide apart, and his

forehead a murderer's, broad and low. The littleness of his eye was hidden under his bushy eyebrows. His nose long, sharp, and flabby, nearly met his mouth. Barkilphedro, properly attired as an emperor, would have somewhat resembled Domitian. His face of muddy yellow, might have been modeled in slimy paste—his immovable cheeks were like putty; he had all kinds of ugly refractory wrinkles; the angle of his jaw was massive, his chin heavy, his ear underbred. In repose, and seen in profile, his upper lip was raised at an acute angle, showing two teeth. Those teeth seemed to look at you. The teeth can look, just as the eye can bite.

Patience, temperance, continence, reserve, self-control, amenity, deference, gentleness, politeness, sobriety, chastity, completed and finished Barkilphedro. He calumniated those virtues by their possession.

In a short time Barkilphedro took a foothold at court.



CHAPTER VIII

INFERI

THERE are two ways of making a footing at court. In the clouds, and you are august; in the mud, and you are powerful.

In the first case, you belong to Olympus.

In the second case, you belong to the private closet.

He who belongs to Olympus has but the thunderbolt, he who is of the private closet has the police.

The private closet contains all the instruments of government, and sometimes, for it is a traitor, its chastisement. Heliogabalus goes there to die. Then it is called the latrines.

Generally it is less tragic. It is there that Alberoni admires Vendôme. Royal personages willingly make it their place of audience. It takes the place of the throne. Louis XIV. receives the Duchess of Burgundy there. Philip V. is shoulder to shoulder there with the queen. The priest penetrates into it. The private closet is sometimes a branch

of the confessional. Therefore it is that at court there are underground fortunes—not always the least. If, under Louis XI., you would be great, be Pierre de Rohan, Marshal of France; if you would be influential, be Olivier le Daim, the barber; if you would, under Mary de Medicis, be glorious, be Sillery, the Chancellor; if you would be a person of consideration, be La Hannon, the maid; if you would, under Louis XV., be illustrious, be Choiseul, the minister; if you would be formidable, be Lebel, the valet. Given, Louis XIV., Bontemps, who makes his bed, is more powerful than Louvois, who raises his armies, and Turenne, who gains his victories. From Richelieu, take Père Joseph, and you have Richelieu nearly empty. There is mystery at least. His eminence in scarlet is magnificent; his eminence in gray is terrible. What power in being a worm! All the Narvaez amalgamated with all the O'Donnells do less work than one Sōr Patrocinio.

Of course, the condition of this power is littleness. If you would remain powerful, remain petty. Be Nothingness. The serpent in repose, twisted into a circle, is a figure at the same time of the infinite and of naught.

One of these viper-like fortunes had fallen to Barkilphedro. He had crawled where he wanted. Flat beasts can get in everywhere. Louis XIV. had bugs in his bed and Jesuits in his policy.

The incompatibility is nil.

In this world everything is a clock. To gravitate is to oscillate. One pole is attracted to the other. Francis I. is attracted by Triboulet; Louis XV. is attracted by Lebel. There exists a deep affinity between extreme elevation and extreme debasement.

It is abasement which directs. Nothing is easier of comprehension. It is he who is below who pulls the strings. No position more convenient. He is the eye, and has the ear. He is the eye of the government; he has the ear of the king. To have the eye of the king, is to draw and shut, at one's whim, the bolt of the royal conscience, and to throw into that conscience whatever one wishes. The mind of the king is his cupboard; if he be a rag-picker, it is his basket. The ears of kings belong not to kings, and therefore it is that, on the whole, the poor devils are not altogether responsible for their actions. He who does not possess his own thought, does not possess his own deed.

A king obeys—what?

Any evil spirit buzzing from outside in his ear; a noisome fly of the abyss. This buzzing commands. A reign is a dictation.

The loud voice is the sovereign; the low voice, sovereignty.

Those who know how to distinguish, in a reign, this low voice, and to hear what it whispers to the loud, are the real historians.

CHAPTER IX

HATE IS AS STRONG AS LOVE

UEEN ANNE had several of these low voices about her. Barkilphedro was one.

Besides the queen, he secretly worked, influenced, and plotted upon Lady Josiana and Lord David. As we have said, he whispered in three ears, one more than Dangeau. Dangeau whispered in but two, in the days when, thrusting himself between Louis XIV., in love with Henrietta, his sister-in-law, and Henrietta, in love with Louis XIV., her brother-in-law, he being Louis' secretary, without the knowledge of Henrietta, and Henrietta's without the knowledge of Louis, he wrote the questions and answers of both the love-making marionettes.

Barkilphedro was so cheerful, so accepting, so incapable of taking up the defense of anybody, possessing so little devotion at bottom, so ugly, so mischievous, that it was quite natural that a regal personage should come to be unable to do without him. Once Anne had tasted Barkilphedro she would have no other flatterer. He flattered her as they flattered Louis the Great, by stinging her neighbors. "The king being ignorant," says Madame de Montchevreuil, "one is obliged to mock at the savants."

To poison the sting, from time to time, is the acme of art. Nero loves to see Locusta at work.

Royal palaces are very easily entered; these madrepores have a way in soon guessed at, contrived, examined, and scooped out at need by the gnawing thing which is called the courtier. A pretext to enter is sufficient. Barkilphedro, having found this pretext, his position with the queen soon became the same as that with the Duchess Josiana—that of an indispensable domestic animal. A witticism risked one day by him immediately led to his perfect understanding of the queen and how to

estimate exactly her kindness of heart. The queen was greatly attached to her Lord Steward, William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, who was a great fool. This lord, who had obtained every Oxford degree and did not know how to spell, one fine morning committed the folly of dying. To die is a very imprudent thing at court, for there is then no further restraint in speaking of you. The queen, in the presence of Barkilphedro, lamented the event, finally exclaiming, with a sigh:

"It is a pity that so many virtues should have been borne and served by so poor an intellect."

"*Dieu veuille avoir son âne!*" whispered Barkilphedro, in a low voice, and in French.

The queen smiled. Barkilphedro noted the smile. His conclusion was that biting pleased. Free license had been given to his spite. From that day he thrust his curiosity everywhere, and his malignity with it. He was given his way, so much was he feared. He who can make the king laugh makes the others tremble. He was a powerful buffoon. Every day he worked his way forward—underground. Barkilphedro became a necessity. Many great people honored him with their confidence, to the extent of charging him, when they required him, with their disgraceful commissions.

There are wheels within wheels at court. Balkilphedro became the motive power. Have you remarked, in certain mechanisms, the smallness of the motive wheel?

Josiana, in particular, who, as we have explained, made use of Barkilphedro's talents as a spy, reposed such confidence in him, that she had not hesitated to intrust him with one of the master-keys of her apartments, by means of which he was able to enter them at any hour. This excessive license of insight into private life was in fashion in the seventeenth century. It was called "giving the key." Josiana had given two of these confidential keys—Lord David had one, Barkilphedro the other. However, to enter straight into a bedchamber was, in the old code of manners, a thing not in the least out of the way. Thence resulted incidents. La Ferté, suddenly drawing back the bed curtains of Mademoiselle Lafont, found, inside, Sainson of the Black Musketeers, etc., etc.

Barkilphedro excelled in making the cunning discoveries, which place the great in the power of the little. His walk in the dark was winding, soft, clever. Like every perfect spy, he was composed of the inclemency of the executioner and the patience of a micograph. He was a born courtier. Every courtier is a noctambulist. The courtier prowls in the night, which is called power. He carries a dark lantern in his hand. He lights up the spot he wishes, and remains in darkness

himself. What he seeks with his lantern is not a man, it is a fool. What he finds is the king.

Kings do not like to see those about them pretend to greatness. Irony aimed at any one except themselves has a charm for them. The talent of Barkilphedro consisted in a perpetual dwarfing of the peers and princes to the advantage of her majesty's stature, thus increased in proportion.

The master-key held by Barkilphedro was made with two sets of wards, one at each end, so as to open the inner apartments in both Josiana's favorite residences,—Hunkerville House in London, Corleone Lodge at Windsor. These two houses were part of the Clancharlie inheritance. Hunkerville House was close to Oldgate. Oldgate was a gate of London, which was entered by the Harwich road, and on which was displayed a statue of Charles II., with a painted angel above his head, and beneath his feet a carved lion and unicorn. From Hunkerville House, in an easterly wind, you heard the peals of St. Marylebone. Corleone Lodge was a Florentine palace of brick and stone, with a marble colonnade, built on pilework, at Windsor, at the head of the wooden bridge, and having one of the finest courts in England.

In the latter palace, near Windsor Castle, Josiana was within the queen's reach. Nevertheless, Josiana liked it.

Scarcely anything in appearance, everything in the root; such was the influence of Barkilphedro over the queen. There is nothing more difficult than to drag up these bad grasses of the court—they take a deep root, and offer no hold above the surface. To root out a Roquelaure, a Triboulet, or a Brummel, is almost impossible.

From day to day, and more and more, did the queen take Barkilphedro into her good graces. Sarah Jennings is famous; Barkilphedro is unknown. His existence remains ignored. The name of Barkilphedro has not reached as far as history. All the moles are not caught by the mole-trapper.

Barkilphedro, once a candidate for orders, had studied a little of everything. Skimming all things leaves naught for result. One may be victim of the *omnis res scibilis.* Having the vessel of the Danaïdes in one's head is the misfortune of a whole race of learned men, who may be termed the sterile. What Barkilphedro had put into his brain had left it empty.

The mind, like nature, abhors vacuum. Into emptiness, nature puts love; the mind often puts hate. Hate occupies.

Hate for hate's sake exists. Art for art's sake exists in nature more than is believed. A man hates—he must do something. Gratuitous hate—formidable word! It means hate which is itself its own payment.

The bear lives by licking his claws. Not indefinitely, of course. The claws must be revictualed. Something must be put under them.

Hate indistinct is sweet and suffices for a time; but one must end by having an object. An animosity diffused over creation is exhausting, like every solitary pleasure. Hate without an object is like a shooting-match without a target. What lends interest to the game is a heart to be pierced. One cannot hate solely for honor; some seasoning is necessary—a man, a woman, somebody, to destroy. This service of making the game interesting; of offering an end; of throwing passion into hate by fixing it on an object; of amusing the hunter by the sight of his living prey; of giving the watcher the hope of the smoking and boiling blood about to flow; of amusing the bird-catcher by the credulity of the uselessly-winged lark; of being a victim, unknowingly reared for murder by a master-mind; all this exquisite and horrible service, of which the person rendering it is unconscious, Josiana rendered Barkilphedro.

Thought is a projectile. Barkilphedro had, from the first day, begun to aim at Josiana the evil intentions which were in his mind. An intention and a carbine are alike. Barkilphedro aimed at Josiana, directing against the duchess all his secret malice. That astonishes you! What has the bird done at which you fire? You want to eat it, you say. And so it was with Barkilphedro.

Josiana could not be struck in the heart—the spot where the enigma lies is hard to wound: but she could be struck in the head—that is, in her pride. It was there that she thought herself strong, and that she was weak.

Barkilphedro had found it out. If Josiana had been able to see clearly through the night of Barkilphedro, if she had been able to distinguish what lay in ambush behind his smile, that proud woman, so highly situated, would have trembled. Fortunately for the tranquillity of her sleep, she was in complete ignorance of what was in the man.

The unexpected spreads, one knows not whence. The profound depths of life are dangerous. There is no small hate. Hate is always enormous. It preserves its stature in the smallest being, and remains a monster. An elephant hated by a worm is in danger.

Even before he struck, Barkilphedro felt, with joy, the foretaste of the evil action which he was about to commit. He did not as yet know what he was going to do to Josiana; but he had made up his mind to do something. To have come to this decision was a great step taken.

To crush Josiana utterly would have been too great a triumph. He did not hope for so much; but to humiliate her, lessen her, bring her grief, redden her proud eyes with tears of rage—what a success!

He counted on it. Tenacious, diligent, faithful to the torment of his neighbor, not to be torn from his purpose, nature had not formed him for nothing. He well understood how to find the flaw in Josiana's golden armor, and how to make the blood of that Olympian flow.

What benefit, we ask again, would accrue to him in so doing? An



immense benefit; doing evil to one who had done good to him. What is an envious man? An ungrateful one. He hates the light which lights and warms him. Zoilus hated that benefit to man, Homer. To inflict on Josiana what would nowadays be called vivisection—to place her, all convulsed, on his anatomical table; to dissect her alive, at his leisure, in some surgery; to cut her up, as an amateur, while she should scream; this dream delighted Barkilphedro!

To arrive at this result it was necessary to suffer somewhat himself; he did so willingly. We may pinch ourselves with our own pincers. The knife as it shuts cuts our fingers. What does it matter? That he should partake of Josiana's torture was a matter of little moment. The executioner handling the red-hot iron, when about to brand a prisoner, takes no heed of a little burn. Because another suffers much, he suffers nothing. To see the victim's writhings takes all pain from the inflicter.

Do harm, whatever happens.

To plan evil for others is mingled with an acceptance of some hazy responsibility. We risk ourselves in the danger which we impel towards another, because the chain of events sometimes, of course, brings unexpected accidents. This does not stop the man who is truly malicious. He feels as much joy as the patient suffers agony. He is tickled by the laceration of the victim. The malicious man blooms in hideous joy. Pain reflects itself on him in a sense of welfare. The Duke of Alva used to warm his hands at the stake. The pile was torture, the reflection of it pleasure. That such transpositions should be possible makes one shudder. Our dark side is unfathomable. *Supplice exquis* (exquisite torture)—the expression is in Bodin*—has perhaps this terrible triple sense: search for the torture; suffering of the tortured; delight of the torturer.

Ambition, appetite; all such words signify some one sacrificed to some one satiated. It is sad that hope should be wicked. Is it that the outpourings of our wishes flow naturally to the direction to which we most incline, that of evil? One of the hardest labors of the just man is to expunge from his soul a malevolence which it is difficult to efface. Almost all our desires, when examined, contain what we dare not avow.

In the completely wicked man this exists in hideous perfection. So much the worse for others, signifies so much the better for himself. The shadows of the caverns of man's mind.

Josiana in a plenitude of security, the fruit of ignorant pride, had a contempt for all danger. The feminine faculty of disdain is extraordinary. Josiana's disdain, unreasoning, involuntary, and confident. Barkilphedro was to her so contemptible, that she would have been astonished had any one remarked to her that such a creature existed. She went, and came, and laughed before this man who was looking at her with evil eyes. Thoughtful, he bided his time.

In proportion as he waited, his determination to cast a despair into this woman's life augmented. Inexorable high tide of malice.

* Book IV., p. 196.

In the meantime he gave himself excellent reasons for his determination. It must not be thought that scoundrels are deficient in self-esteem. They enter into details with themselves in their lofty monologues, and they take matters with a high hand. How? This Josiana had bestowed charity on him! She had thrown some crumbs of her enormous wealth to him, as to a beggar. She had nailed and riveted him to an office which was unworthy him. Yes; that he, Barkilphedro, almost a clergyman, of varied and profound talent, a learned man, with the material in him for a bishop, should have for employ the registration of nasty patience-trying shards, that he should have to pass his life in the garret of a register-office, gravely uncorking stupid bottles, incrusted with all the nastiness of the sea, deciphering musty parchments, like filthy conjuring-books, dirty wills, and other illegible stuff of the kind, was the fault of this Josiana. Worst of all! this creature "thee'd" and "thou'd" him!

And he should not revenge himself!—he should not punish such conduct!

Well, in that case there would no longer be justice on earth!

CHAPTER X

THE FLAME WHICH WOULD BE SEEN IF MAN WERE TRANSPARENT

WHAT! this woman, this extravagant thing, this libidinous dreamer, a virgin until the opportunity occurred, this bit of flesh as yet unfreed, this bold creature under a princess's coronet; this Diana by pride, as yet untaken by the first comer, just because chance had so willed it; this bastard of a low-lived king who had not the intellect to keep his place; this Duchess by a lucky hit, who, being a fine lady, played the goddess, and who, had she been poor, would have been a prostitute; this lady, more or less, this robber of a proscribed man's goods, this overbearing strumpet, because one day he, Barkilphedro, had not money enough to buy his dinner, and to get a lodging, she had had the impudence to seat him in her house at the corner of a table, and to put him up in some hole in her intolerable palace; where? never mind where; perhaps in the barn, perhaps in the cellar, what does it matter? a little better than her valets, a little worse than her horses. She had abused his distress; his, Barkilphedro's; in hastening to do him treacherous good, a thing which the rich do in order to humiliate the poor, and to tie them, like curs led by a string. Besides, what did the service she rendered him cost her? A service is worth what it costs. She had spare rooms in her house. She came to Barkilphedro's aid! A great thing, indeed; had she eaten a spoonful the less of turtle soup for it? had she deprived herself of anything in the hateful overflowing of her superfluous luxuries? No. She had added to it a vanity, a luxury, a good action like a ring on her finger, the relief of a man of wit, the patronization of a clergyman. She could give herself airs; say, I lavish kindness; I fill the mouths of men of letters; I am his benefactress. How lucky the wretch was to find me out! What a patroness of the arts I am! All for having set up a truckle-bed in a wretched garret in the roof. As for the place in the

Admiralty, Balkilphredro owed it to Josiana; by Jove, a pretty appointment! Josiana had made Barkilphedro what he was. She had created him. Be it so. Yes, created nothing. Less than nothing. For in his absurd situation he felt borne down, tongue-tied, disfigured. What did he owe Josiana? The thanks due from a hunchback to the mother who bore him deformed. Behold your privileged ones, your folks overwhelmed with fortune, your parvenus, your favorites of that horrid step-mother, Fortune! And that man of talent, Barkilphedro, was obliged to stand on staircases, to bow to footmen, to climb to the top of the house at night, to be courteous, assiduous, pleasant, respectful, and to have ever on his muzzle a respectful grimace! Was not it enough to make him gnash his teeth with rage! And all the while she was putting pearls round her neck, and making amorous poses to her fool, Lord David Dirry-Moir; the hussy!

Never let any one do you a service. They will abuse the advantage it gives them. Never allow yourself to be taken in the act of inanition. They would relieve you. Because he was starving, this woman had found it a sufficient pretext to give him bread. From that moment he was her servant; a craving of the stomach, and there is a chain for life! To be obliged is to be sold. The happy, the powerful, make use of the moment you stretch out your hand to place a penny in it, and at the crisis of your weakness make you a slave, and a slave of the worst kind, the slave of an act of charity. A slave forced to love the enslaver. What infamy! what want of delicacy! what an assault on your self-respect! Then all is over. You are sentenced for life to consider this man good, that woman beautiful; to remain in the back rows; to approve, to applaud, to admire, to worship, to prostrate yourself, to blister your knees by long genuflections, to sugar your words when you are gnawing your lips with anger, when you are biting down your cries of fury, and when you have within you more savage turbulence and more bitter foam than the ocean!

It is thus that the rich make prisoners of the poor.

This slime of a good action performed towards you bedaubs and bespatters you with mud forever.

An alms is irremediable. Gratitude is paralysis. A benefit is a sticky and repugnant adherence which deprives you of free movement. Those odious, opulent, and spoiled creatures whose pity has thus injured you are well aware of this. It is done—you are their creature. They have bought you—and how? By a bone taken from their dog and cast to you. They have flung that bone at your head. You have been stoned as much as benefited. It is all one. Have you gnawed the bone —yes or no? You have had your place in the dog-kennel as well.

Then be thankful. Be ever thankful. Adore your masters. Kneel on indefinitely. A benefit implies an understood inferiority accepted by you. It means that you feel them to be gods and yourself a poor devil. Your diminution augments them. Your bent form makes theirs more upright. In the tones of their voices there is an impertinent inflection. Their family matters, their marriages, their baptisms, their child-bearings, their progeny, all concern you. A wolf cub is born to them. Well! you have to compose a sonnet. You are a poet because you are low. Isn't it enough to make the stars fall! A little more, and they would make you wear their old shoes.

"Who have you got there, my dear? How ugly he is! Who is that man?"

"I do not know. A sort of scholar, whom I feed."

Thus converse these idiots, without even lowering their voice. You hear, and remain mechanically amiable. If you are ill, your masters will send for the doctor—not their own. Occasionally they may even inquire after you. Being of a different species from you, and at an inaccessible height above you, they are affable. Their height makes them easy. They know that equality is impossible. By force of disdain they are polite. At table they give you a little nod. Sometimes they absolutely know how your name is spelt! They only show that they are your protectors by walking unconsciously over all the delicacy and susceptibility you possess. They treat you with good-nature.

Is all this to be borne?

No doubt he was eager to punish Josiana. He must teach her with whom she had to deal!

Oh! my rich gentry, because you cannot eat up everything, because opulence produces indigestion, seeing that your stomachs are no bigger than ours, because it is, after all, better to distribute the remainder than to throw it away, you exalt a morsel flung to the poor into an act of magnificence. Oh! you give us bread, you give us shelter, you give us clothes, you give us employment, and you push audacity, folly, cruelty, stupidity, and absurdity, to the pitch of believing that we are grateful. The bread is the bread of servitude, the shelter is a footman's bedroom, the clothes are a livery, the employment is ridiculous, paid for, it is true, but brutalizing. Oh! you believe in the right to humiliate us with lodging and nourishment, and you imagine that we are your debtors, and you count on our gratitude? Very well! we will eat up your substance, we will devour you alive, and gnaw your heart-strings with our teeth.

This Josiana! was it not absurd? what merit had she? She had accomplished the wonderful work of coming into the world as a testi-

mony of the folly of her father, and the shame of her mother. She had done us the favor to exist, and for her kindness in becoming a public scandal, they paid her millions; she had estates and castles, warrens, parks, lakes, forests, and I know not what besides, and with all that she



was making a fool of herself, and verses were addressed to her! And Barkilphedro, who had studied and labored and taken pains, and stuffed his eyes and his brain with great books, who had grown mouldy in old works and in science, who was full of wit, who could command armies, who could, if he would, write tragedies like Otway and Dryden, who was made to be an emperor, Barkilphedro had been reduced to permit

this nobody to prevent him from dying of hunger. Could the usurpation of the rich, the hateful elect of chance, go farther? They put on the semblance of being generous to us, of protecting us, and of smiling on us, and we would drink their blood and lick our lips after it! That this low woman of the court should have the odious power of being a benefactress, and that a man so superior should be condemned to pick up such bribes falling from such a hand, what a frightful iniquity! and what social system is this which has for its base disproportion and injustice? Would it not be best to take it by the four corners, and to throw pell-mell to the ceiling the damask table-cloth, and the festival, and the orgies, and the tippling and drunkenness, and the guests, and those with their elbows on the table, and those with their paws under it, and the insolent who give and the idiots who accept, and to spit it all back again in the face of Providence, and fling all the earth to the heavens In the meantime let us stick our claws into Josiana.

Thus dreamed Barkilphedro. Such were the ragings of his soul. It is the habit of the envious man to absolve himself, amalgamating with his personal grievance the public wrongs.

All the wild forms of hateful passions went and came in the intellect of this ferocious being. At the corners of old maps of the world of the fifteenth century, are great vague spaces without shape or name, on which are written these three words: *Hic sunt leones.* Such a dark corner is there also in man. Passions grow and growl somewhere within us, and we may say of an obscure portion of our souls, there are lions here.

Is this scaffolding of wild reasoning absolutely absurd? does it lack a certain justice? We must confess it does not.

It is fearful to think that judgment within us is not justice. Judgment is the relative, justice is the absolute. Think of the difference between a judge and a just man.

Wicked men lead conscience astray with authority. There are gymnastics of untruth. A sophist is a forger, and this forger sometimes brutalizes good sense.

A certain logic, very supple, very implacable, and very agile, is at the service of evil, and excels in stabbing truth in the dark. These are blows struck by the devil at Providence.

The worst of it was that Barkilphedro had a presentiment. He was undertaking a heavy task, and he was afraid that after all the evil achieved might not be proportionate to the work.

To be corrosive as he was, to have within himself a will of steel, a hate of diamond, a burning curiosity for the catastrophe, and to burn nothing, to decapitate nothing, to exterminate nothing; to be what he

was, a force of devastation, a voracious animosity, a devourer of the happiness of others, to have been created (for there is a creator, whether God or devil), to have been created Barkilphedro all over, and to inflict perhaps after all but a fillip of the finger—could this be possible? could it be that Barkilphedro should miss his aim? To be a lever powerful enough to heave great masses of rock, and when sprung to the utmost power, to succeed only in giving an affected woman a bump in the forehead! to be a catapult dealing ruin on a pole-kitten! To accomplish the task of Sisyphus, to crush an ant; to sweat all over with hate, and for nothing at all. Would not this be humiliating, when he felt himself a mechanism of hostility capable of reducing the world to powder! To put into movement all the wheels within wheels, to work in the darkness all the mechanism of a Marly machine, and to succeed perhaps in pinching the end of a little rosy finger! He was to turn over and over blocks of marble, perchance with the result of ruffling a little the smooth surface of the court! Providence has a way of thus expending forces grandly. The movement of a mountain often only displaces a molehill.

Besides this, when the court is the dangerous arena, nothing is more dangerous than to aim at your enemy and miss him. In the first place, it unmasks you and irritates him; but besides and above all, it displeases the master. Kings do not like the unskillful. Let us have no contusions, no ugly gashes. Kill anybody, but give no one a bloody nose. He who kills is clever, he who wounds awkward. Kings do not like to see their servants lamed. They are displeased if you chip a porcelain jar on their chimney-piece, or a courtier in their cortége. The court must be kept neat. Break and replace; that does not matter. Besides, all this agrees perfectly with the taste of princes for scandal. Speak evil, do none; or if you do, let it be in grand style.

Stab, do not scratch, unless the pin be poisoned. This would be an extenuating circumstance, and was, we may remember, the case with Barkilphedro.

Every malicious pigmy is a phial in which is enclosed the dragon of Solomon. The phial is microscopic, the dragon immense. A formidable condensation, awaiting the gigantic hour of dilation! Ennui consoled by the premeditation of explosion! The prisoner is larger than the prison. A latent giant! how wonderful! A minnow in which is contained a hydra. To be this fearful magical box, to contain within him a Leviathan, is to the dwarf both a torture and a delight.

Nor would anything have caused Barkilphedro to let go his hold. He awaited his time. Was it to come? What mattered that? He watched for it. Self-love is mixed up in the malice of the very wicked

man. To make holes and gaps in a court fortune higher than your own, to undermine it at all risks and perils, while encased and concealed yourself, is, we repeat, exceedingly interesting. The player at such a game becomes eager, even to passion. He throws himself into the work as if he were composing an epic. To be very mean, and to attack that which is great, is in itself a brilliant action. It is a fine thing to be a flea on a lion.

The noble beast feels the bite, and expends his mighty anger against the atom. An encounter with a tiger would weary him less; see how the actors exchange their parts. The lion, humiliated, feels the sting of the insect, and the flea can say, "I have in my veins the blood of a lion."

However, these reflections but half appeased the cravings of Barkilphedro's pride. Consolations, palliations at most. To vex is one thing; to torment would be infinitely better. Barkilphedro had a thought which returned to him without ceasing; his success might not go beyond just irritating the epidermis of Josiana. What could he hope for more; he so obscure, against her so radiant! A scratch is worth but little to him who longs to see the crimson blood of his flayed victim, and to hear her cries as she lies before him more than naked, without even that garment, the skin! With such a craving, how sad to be powerless!

Alas, there is nothing perfect!

However, he resigned himself. Not being able to do better, he only dreamed half his dream. To play a treacherous trick is an object after all.

What a man is he who revenges himself for a benefit received! Barkilphedro was a giant among such men. Usually, ingratitude is forgetfulness. With this man, patented in wickedness, it was fury. The vulgar ingrate is full of ashes: what was within Barkilphedro? A furnace. A furnace walled round by hate, silence, and rancor, awaiting Josiana for fuel. Never had a man abhorred a woman to such a point without reason. How terrible! She was his dream, his pre-occupation, his ennui, his rage.

Perhaps he was a little in love with her.

CHAPTER XI

BARKILPHEDRO IN AMBUSCADE

TO find the vulnerable spot in Josiana, and to strike her there, was, for all the causes we have just mentioned, the imperturbable determination of Barkilphedro.

The wish is insufficient; the power is required.

How was he to set about it? There was the question.

Vulgar vagabonds set the scene of any wickedness they intend to commit with care. They do not feel themselves strong enough to seize the opportunity as it passes, to take possession of it by fair means or foul, and to constrain it to serve them. Deep scoundrels disdain preliminary combinations. They start from their villainies alone, merely arming themselves all round, prepared to avail themselves of various chances which may occur, and then, like Barkilphedro, await the opportunity. They know that a ready-made scheme runs the risk of fitting ill into the event which may present itself. It is not thus that a man makes himself master of possibilities, and guides them as one pleases. You can come to no previous arrangement with destiny. To-morrow will not obey you. There is a certain want of discipline in chance.

Therefore they watch for it, and summon it suddenly, authoritatively, on the spot. No plan, no sketch, no rough model; no ready-made shoe ill-fitting the unexpected. They plunge headlong into the dark. To turn to immediate and rapid profit any circumstance that can aid him is the quality which distinguishes the able scoundrel, and elevates the villain into the demon. To strike suddenly at fortune, *that* is true genius.

The true scoundrel strikes you from a sling with the first stone he can pick up. Clever malefactors count on the unexpected, that senseless accomplice of so many crimes. They grasp the incident and leap

on it; there is no better *Ars poetica* for this species of talent. Meanwhile be sure with whom you have to deal. Survey the ground.

With Barkilphedro the ground was Queen Anne. Barkilphedro approached the queen, and so close, that sometimes he fancied he heard the monologues of her majesty. Sometimes he was present unheeded at conversations between the sisters. Neither did they forbid his sliding in a word. He profited by this to lessen himself,—a way of inspiring confidence. Thus, one day in the garden at Hampton Court, being behind the duchess, who was behind the queen, he heard Anne, following the fashion awkwardly, enunciating sentiments.

"The beasts are happy," said the queen. "They run no risk of going to hell."

"They are there already," replied Josiana.

This answer, which bluntly substituted philosophy for religion, displeased the queen. If, perchance, there was depth in the observation, Anne felt shocked.

"My dear," said she to Josiana, "we talk of hell like a couple of fools. Ask Barkilphedro all about it. He ought to know such things."

"As a devil?" said Josiana.

"As a beast," replied Barkilphedro, with a bow.

"Madam," said the queen to Josiana, "he is cleverer than we."

For a man like Barkilphedro to approach the queen, was to obtain a hold on her. He could say, I hold her. Now, he wanted a means of taking advantage of his power for his own benefit.

He had his foothold in the court. To be settled there was a fine thing. No chance could now escape him. More than once he had made the queen smile maliciously. This was having a license to shoot. But was there any preserved game? Did this license to shoot permit him to break the wing or the leg of one like the sister of her majesty? The first point to make clear was, did the queen love her sister? One false step would lose all. Barkilphedro watched.

Before he plays, the player looks at the cards. What trumps has he? Barkilphedro began by examining the age of the two women. Josiana, twenty-three; Anne, forty-one. So far so good. He held trumps. The moment that a woman ceases to count by springs, and begins to count by winters, she becomes cross. A dull rancor possesses her against the time of which she carries the proofs. Fresh-blown beauties, perfumes for others, are to such a one but thorns. Of the roses she feels but the prick. It seems as if all the freshness is stolen from her, and that beauty decreases in her because it increases in others.

To profit by this secret ill-humor, to dive into the wrinkle on the

face of this woman of forty, who was a queen, seemed a good game for Barkilphedro.

Envy excels in exciting jealousy, as a rat draws the crocodile from its hole.

Barkilphedro fixed his wise gaze on Anne. He saw into the queen, as one sees into a stagnant pool. The marsh has its transparency. In dirty water we see vices, in muddy water we see stupidity; Anne was muddy water.

Embryos of sentiments and larvæ of ideas moved in her thick brain. They were not distinct; they had scarcely any outline. But they were realities, however shapeless. The queen thought this; the queen desired that. To decide what, was the difficulty. The confused transformations which work in stagnant water are difficult to study.

The queen, habitually obscure, sometimes made sudden and stupid revelations. It was on these that it was necessary to seize. He must take advantage of them on the moment. How did the queen feel towards the Duchess Josiana? Did she wish her good or evil?

Here was the problem. Barkilphedro set himself to solve it. This problem solved, he might go further.

Divers chances served Barkilphedro; his tenacity at the watch above all.

Anne was, on her husband's side, slightly related to the new Queen of Prussia, wife of the king with the hundred chamberlains. She had her portrait painted on enamel, after the process of Turquet of Mayerne. This Queen of Prussia had also a younger illegitimate sister, the Baroness Drika.

One day, in the presence of Barkilphedro, Anne asked the Prussian ambassador some question about this Drika.

"They say she is rich?"

"Very rich."

"She has palaces?"

"More magnificent than those of her sister, the queen."

"Whom will she marry?"

"A great lord, the Count Gormo."

"Pretty?"

"Charming."

"Is she young?"

"Very young."

"As beautiful as the queen?"

The ambassador lowered his voice, and replied:

"More beautiful."

"That is insolent," murmured Barkilphedro.

The queen was silent, then she exclaimed:

"Those bastards!"

Barkilphedro noticed the plural.

Another time, when the queen was leaving the chapel, Barkilphedro kept pretty close to her majesty, behind the two grooms of the almonry. Lord David Dirry-Moir, crossing the ranks of women, made a sensation by his handsome appearance. As he passed there was an explosion of feminine exclamations.

"How elegant! How gallant! What a noble air! How handsome!"

"How disagreeable!" grumbled the queen.

Barkilphedro overheard this; it decided him.

He could hurt the duchess without displeasing the queen.

The first problem was solved; but now the second presented itself.

What could he do to harm the duchess? What means did his wretched appointment offer to attain so difficult an object?

Evidently none.



CHAPTER XII

SCOTLAND, IRELAND, AND ENGLAND

ET us note a circumstance. Josiana had *le tour*.

This is easy to understand when we reflect that she was, although illegitimate, the queen's sister—that is to say, a princely personage.

To have *le tour:* what does it mean?

Viscount St. John, otherwise Bolingbroke, wrote as follows to Thomas Lennard, Earl of Sussex:

"Two things mark the great—in England, they have *le tour:* in France, *le pour*.

When the king of France traveled, the courier of the court stopped at the halting place in the evening, and assigned lodgings to his majesty's suite.

Amongst the gentlemen some had an immense privilege. "They have *le pour*," says the *Journal Historique* for the year 1694, page 6; "which means that the quarter-master who marks the billets puts '*Pour*' before their names—as '*Pour M. le Prince de Soubise:*' instead of which, when he marks the lodging of one who is not royal, he does not put *pour*, but simply the name—as '*Le Duc de Gesvres*,' '*le Duc de Mazarin*.'" This *pour* on a door indicated a prince or a favorite. A favorite is worse than a prince. The king granted *le pour*, like a blue ribbon or a peerage.

Avoir le tour in England was less glorious, but more real. It was a sign of intimate communication with the sovereign. Whoever might be, by birth or favor, in a position to receive direct communications from majesty, had in the wall of their bedchamber a shaft, in which was adjusted a bell. The bell sounded, the shaft opened, a royal missive appeared on a gold plate or on a cushion of velvet, and the shaft closed. This was intimate and solemn, the mysterious in the familiar. The

shaft was used for no other purpose. The sound of the bell announced a royal message. No one saw who brought it. It was of course merely the page of the king or the queen. Leicester *avait le tour* under Elizabeth; Buckingham under James I. Josiana had it under Anne, though not much in favor. Never was a privilege more envied.

This privilege entailed additional servility. The recipient was more of a servant. At Court that which elevates, degrades. *Avoir le tour* was said in French; this circumstance of English etiquette having, probably, been borrowed from some old French folly.

Lady Josiana, a virgin peeress as Elizabeth had been a virgin queen, led—sometimes in the City, and sometimes in the country, according to the season—an almost princely life, and kept nearly a court, at which Lord David was courtier, with many others.

Not being married, Lord David and Lady Josiana could show themselves together in public without exciting ridicule, and they did so frequently. They often went to plays and race-courses in the same carriage, and sat together in the same box. They were chilled by the impending marriage, which was not only permitted to them, but imposed upon them; but they felt an attraction for each other's society. The privacy permitted to the engaged has a frontier easily passed. From this they abstained; that which is easy is in bad taste.

The best pugilistic encounters then took place at Lambeth, a parish in which the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury has a palace, though the air there is unhealthy, and a rich Library open at certain hours to decent people.

One evening in winter there was, in a meadow there, the gates of which were locked, a fight, at which Josiana, escorted by Lord David, was present. She had asked:

"Are women admitted?"

And David had responded:

"*Sunt feminæ magnates!*"

Liberal translation, "*Not shop-keepers.*" Literal translation, "*Great ladies exist.*" A duchess goes everywhere.

This is why Lady Josiana saw a boxing match.

Lady Josiana made only this concession to propriety—she dressed as a man, a very common custom at that period. Women seldom traveled otherwise. Out of every six persons who traveled by the coach from Windsor, it was rare that there were not one or two amongst them who were women in male attire; a certain sign of high birth.

Lord David, being in company with a woman, could not take any part in the match himself, and merely assisted as one of the audience.

Lady Josiana betrayed her quality in one way; she had an opera glass, then used by gentlemen only.

This encounter in the noble science was presided over by Lord Germaine, great-grandfather, or grand-uncle, of that Lord Germaine who, towards the end of the eighteenth century, was colonel, ran away in a battle, was afterwards made Minister of War, and only escaped from the shells of the enemy, to fall by a worse fate, shot through and through by the sarcasm of Sheridan.

Many gentlemen were betting. Harry Bellew, of Carleton, who had claims to the extinct peerage of Bella-aqua, with Henry, Lord Hyde, member of Parliament for the borough of Dunhivid, which is also called Launceston; the Honorable Peregrine Bertie, member for the borough of Truro, with Sir Thomas Colpepper, member for Maidstone; the Laird of Lamyrbau, which is on the borders of Lothian, with Samuel Trefusis, of the borough of Penryn; Sir Bartholomew Gracedieu, of the borough of Saint Ives, with the Honorable Charles Bodville, who was called Lord Robartes, and who was Custos Rotulorum of the county of Cornwall; besides many others.

Of the two combatants, one was an Irishman, named after his native mountain in Tipperary, Phelem-ghe-Madone, and the other a Scot, named Helmsgail.

They represented the national pride of each country. Ireland and Scotland were about to set to; Erin was going to fisticuff Gajothel. So that the bets amounted to over forty thousand guineas, besides the stakes.

The two champions were naked, excepting short breeches buckled over the hips, and spiked boots laced as high as the ankles.

Helmsgail, the Scot, was a youth scarcely nineteen, but he had already had his forehead sewn up, for which reason they laid two and one third to one on him. The month before he had broken the ribs and gouged out the eyes of a pugilist, named Sixmileswater. This explained the enthusiasm he created. He had won his backers twelve thousand pounds. Besides having his forehead sewn up, Helmsgail's jaw had been broken. He was neatly made and active. He was about the height of a small woman, upright, thick set, and of a stature low and threatening. And nothing had been lost of the advantages given him by nature; not a muscle which was not trained to its object, pugilism. His firm chest was compact, and brown and shining like brass. He smiled, and three teeth which he had lost added to this smile.

His adversary was tall and overgrown—that is to say, weak.

He was a man of forty years of age, six feet high, with the chest of a hippopotamus, and a mild expression of face. The blow of his fist

would break in the deck of a vessel, but he did not know how to use it.

The Irishman, Phelem-ghe-Madone, was all surface, and seemed to have entered the ring to receive, rather than to give, blows. Only it was felt that he would take a deal of punishment. Like underdone beef, tough to chew, and impossible to swallow. He was what was termed, in local slang, raw meat. He squinted. He seemed resigned.

The two men had passed the preceding night in the same bed, and had slept together. They had each drunk port wine from the same glass, to the three-inch mark.

Each had his group of seconds—men of savage expression, threatening the umpires when it suited their side. Amongst Helmsgail's supporters, was to be seen John Gromane, celebrated for having carried an ox on his back; and one called John Bray, who had once carried on his back ten bushels of flour, at fifteen pecks to the bushel, besides the miller himself, and had walked over two hundred paces under the weight. On the side of Phelem-ghe-Madone, Lord Hyde had brought from Launceston a certain Kilter, who lived at Green castle, and could throw a stone weighing twenty pounds to a greater height than the highest tower of the castle.

These three men, Kilter, Bray, and Gromane, were Cornishmen by birth, and did honor to their county.

The other seconds were brutal fellows, with broad backs, bowed legs, knotted fists, dull faces; ragged, fearing nothing, nearly all jail-birds.

Many of them understood admirably how to make the police drunk. Each profession should have its peculiar talents.

The field chosen was farther off than the bear garden, where they formerly baited bears, bulls, and dogs; it was beyond the line of the farthest houses, by the side of the ruins of the Priory of Saint Mary Overy, dismantled by Henry VIII. The wind was northerly, and biting; a small rain fell, which was instantly frozen into ice. Some gentlemen present were evidently fathers of families, recognized as such by their putting up their umbrellas.

On the side of Phelem-ghe-Madone was Colonel Moncreif, as umpire; and Kilter, as second, to support him on his knee.

On the side of Helmsgail, the Honorable Pughe Beaumaris was umpire, with Lord Desertum, from Kilcarry, as bottle-holder, to support him on his knee.

The two combatants stood for a few seconds motionless in the ring, while the watches were being compared. They then approached each other and shook hands.

Phelem-ghe-Madone said to Helmsgail:
"I should prefer going home."
Helmsgail answered, handsomely.
"The gentlemen must not be disappointed, on any account."



Naked as they were, they felt the cold. Phelem-ghe-Madone shook. His teeth chattered.

Doctor Eleanor Sharpe, nephew of the Archbishop of York, cried out to them:

"Set to, boys; it will warm you."

Those friendly words thawed them.

They set to.

But neither one nor the other was angry. There were three ineffectual rounds. The Rev. Doctor Gumdraith, one of the forty Fellows of All Souls' College, cried:

"Spirit them up with gin."

But the two umpires and the two seconds adhered to the rule. Yet it was exceedingly cold.

First blood was claimed.

They were again set face to face.

They looked at each other, approached, stretched their arms, touched each other's fists, and then drew back.

All at once, Helmsgail, the little man, sprang forward. The real fight had begun.

Phelem-ghe-Madone was struck in the face, between the eyes. His whole face streamed with blood. The crowd cried:

"Helmsgail has tapped his claret!"

There was applause. Phelem-ghe-Madone, turning his arms like the sails of a windmill, struck out at random.

The Honorable Peregrine Bertie said, "Blinded;" but he was not blind yet.

Then Helmsgail heard on all sides these encouraging words:

"Bung up his peepers!"

On the whole, the two champions were really well matched; and, notwithstanding the unfavorable weather, it was seen that the fight would be a success.

The great giant, Phelem-ghe-Madone, had to bear the inconvenience of his advantages; he moved heavily. His arms were massive as clubs; but his chest was a mass. His little opponent ran, struck, sprung, gnashed his teeth; redoubling vigor by quickness, from knowledge of the science.

On the one side was the primitive blow of the fist—savage, uncultivated, in a state of ignorance; on the other side, the civilized blow of the fist. Helmsgail fought as much with his nerves as with his muscles, and with as much intention as force. Phelem-ghe-Madone was a kind of sluggish mauler,—somewhat mauled himself, to begin with. It was art against nature. It was cultivated ferocity against barbarism.

It was clear that the barbarian would be beaten, but not very quickly. Hence the interest.

A little man against a big one, and the chances are in favor of the little one. The cat has the best of it with a dog. Goliaths are always vanquished by Davids.

A hail of exclamations followed the combatants.

"Bravo, Helmsgail! Good! Well done, Highlander! Now, Phelem!"

And the friends of Helmsgail repeated their benevolent exhortation:

"Bung up his peepers!"

Helmsgail did better. Rapidly bending down and back again, with the undulation of a serpent, he struck Phelem-ghe-Madone in the sternum. The Colossus staggered.

"Foul blow!" cried Viscount Barnard.

Phelem-ghe-Madone sank down on the knee of his second, saying:

"I am beginning to get warm."

Lord Desertum consulted the umpires, and said:

"Five minutes before time is called."

Phelem-ghe-Madone was becoming weaker. Kilter wiped the blood from his face and the sweat from his body with a flannel, and placed the neck of a bottle to his mouth. They had come to the eleventh round. Phelem, besides the scar on his forehead, had his breast disfigured by blows, his belly swollen, and the fore part of the head scarified. Helmsgail was untouched.

A kind of tumult arose amongst the gentlemen.

Lord Barnard repeated, "Foul blow!"

"Bets void!" said the Laird of Lamyrbau.

"I claim my stake!" replied Sir Thomas Colpepper.

And the honorable member for the borough of Saint Ives, Sir Bartholomew Gracedieu, added, "Give me back my five hundred guineas, and I will go. Stop the fight."

Phelem arose, staggering like a drunken man, and said:

"Let us go on fighting, on one condition—that I also shall have the right to give one foul blow."

They cried, "Agreed!" from all parts of the ring. Helmsgail shrugged his shoulders. Five minutes elapsed, and they set to again.

The fighting, which was agony to Phelem, was play to Helmsgail. Such are the triumphs of science.

The little man found means of putting the big one into chancery—that is to say, Helmsgail suddenly took under his left arm, which was bent like a steel crescent, the huge head of Phalem-ghe-Madone, and held it there under his armpit, the neck bent and twisted, whilst Helmsgail's right fist fell again and again like a hammer on a nail, only from below and striking upwards, thus smashing his opponent's face at his ease. When Phelem, released at length, lifted his head, he had no longer a face.

That which had been a nose, eyes, and a mouth, now looked only like a black sponge soaked in blood. He spat, and on the ground lay four of his teeth.

Then he fell. Kilter received him on his knee.

Helmsgail was hardly touched: he had some insignificant bruises, and a scratch on his collar bone.

No one was cold now. They laid sixteen and a quarter to one on Helmsgail.

Harry Carleton cried out:

"It is all over with Phelem-ghe-Madone. I will lay my peerage of Bella-aqua, and my title of Lord Bellew, against the Archbishop of Canterbury's old wig, on Helmsgail."

"Give me your muzzle," said Kilter to Phelem-ghe-Madone. And stuffing the bloody flannel into the bottle, he washed him all over with gin. The mouth re-appeared, and he opened one eyelid. His temples seemed fractured.

"One round more, my friend," said Kilter; and he added, "for the honor of the low town."

The Welsh and the Irish understand each other, still Phelem made no sign of having any power of understanding left.

Phelem arose, supported by Kilter. It was the twenty-fifth round. From the way in which this Cyclops, for he had but one eye, placed himself in position, it was evident that this was the last round, for no one doubted his defeat. He placed his guard below his chin, with the awkwardness of a failing man.

Helmsgail, with a skin hardly sweating, cried out:

"I'll back myself, a thousand to one."

Helmsgail, raising his arm, struck out; and, what was strange, both fell. A ghastly chuckle was heard. It was Phelem-ghe-Madone's expression of delight. While receiving the terrible blow given him by Helmsgail on the skull, he had given him a foul blow on the navel.

Helmsgail, lying on his back, rattled in his throat.

The spectators looked at him as he lay on the ground, and said, "Paid back!" All clapped their hands, even those who had lost. Phelem-ghe-Madone had given foul blow for foul blow, and had only asserted his right.

They carried Helmsgail off on an hand-barrow. The opinion was that he would not recover.

Lord Robartes exclaimed, "I win twelve hundred guineas."

Phelem-ghe-Madone was evidently maimed for life.

As she left, Josiana took the arm of Lord David, an act which was tolerated amongst people "engaged." She said to him:

"It is very fine, but——"

"But what?"

"I thought it would have driven away my spleen. It has not."

Lord David stopped, looked at Josiana, shut his mouth, and inflated his cheeks, whilst he nodded his head, which signified attention, and said to the duchess:

"For spleen there is but one remedy."

"What is it?"

"Gwynplaine."

The duchess asked:

"And who is Gwynplaine?"



BOOK II

GWYNPLAINE AND DEA

CHAPTER I

WHEREIN WE SEE THE FACE OF HIM OF WHOM WE HAVE HITHERTO SEEN ONLY THE ACTS



NATURE had been prodigal of her kindness to Gwynplaine. She had bestowed on him a mouth opening to his ears, ears folding over to his eyes, a shapeless nose to support the spectacles of the grimace maker, and a face that no one could look upon without laughing.

We have just said that nature had loaded Gwynplaine with her gifts. But was it nature? Had she not been assisted?

Two slits for eyes, a hiatus for a mouth, a snub protuberance with two holes for nostrils, a flattened face, all having for the result an appearance of laughter; it is certain that nature never produces such perfection single-handed.

But is laughter a synonym of joy?

If, in the presence of this mountebank—for he was one—the first impression of gayety wore off, and the man were observed with attention, traces of art were to be recognized. Such a face could never have been created by chance, it must have resulted from intention. Such perfect completeness is not in nature. Man can do nothing to create

beauty, but everything to produce ugliness. A Hottentot profile cannot be changed into a Roman outline, but out of a Grecian nose you may make a Calmuck's. It only requires to obliterate the root of the nose, and to flatten the nostrils. The dog Latin of the middle ages had a reason for its creation of the verb *denasare*. Had Gwynplaine when a child been so worthy of attention that his face had been subjected to transmutation? Why not? Needed there a greater motive than the speculation of his future exhibition? According to all appearance, industrious manipulators of children had worked upon his face. It seemed evident that a mysterious and probably occult science, which was to surgery what alchemy was to chemistry, had chiseled his flesh, evidently at a very tender age, and manufactured his countenance with premeditation. That science, clever with the knife, skilled in obtusions and ligatures, had enlarged the mouth, cut away the lips, laid bare the gums, distended the ears, cut the cartilages, displaced the eyelids and the cheeks, enlarged the zygomatic muscle, pressed the scars and cicatrices to a level, turned back the skin over the lesions whilst the face was thus stretched, from all which resulted that powerful and profound piece of sculpture, the mask, Gwynplaine.

Man is not born thus.

However it may have been, the manipulation of Gwynplaine had succeeded admirably. Gwynplaine was a gift of Providence to dispel the sadness of man.

Of what providence? Is there a providence of demons as well as of God? We put the question without answering it.

Gwynplaine was a mountebank. He showed himself on the platform. No such effect had ever before been produced. Hypochondriacs were cured by the sight of him alone. He was avoided by folks in mourning, because they were compelled to laugh when they saw him, without regard to their decent gravity. One day the executioner came, and Gwynplaine made him laugh. Every one who saw Gwynplaine held his sides; he spoke, and they rolled on the ground. He was removed from sadness as is pole from pole. Spleen at the one; Gwynplaine at the other.

Thus he rose rapidly in the fair ground and at the cross-roads to the very satisfactory renown of a horrible man.

It was Gwynplaine's laugh which created the laughter of others, yet he did not laugh himself. His face laughed; his thoughts did not. The extraordinary face which chance or a special and weird industry had fashioned for him, laughed alone. Gwynplaine had nothing to do with it. The outside did not depend on the interior. The laugh which he had not placed, himself, on his brow, on his eyelids, on his mouth, he

could not remove. It had been stamped forever on his face. It was automatic, and the more irresistible because it seemed petrified. No one could escape from this rictus. Two convulsions of the face are infectious; laughing and yawning. By virtue of the mysterious operation to which Gwynplaine had probably been subjected in his infancy, every part of his face contributed to that rictus; his whole physiognomy led to that result, as a wheel centres in the nave. All his emotions, whatever they might have been, augmented his strange face of joy, or to speak more correctly, aggravated it. Any astonishment which might seize him, any suffering which he might feel, any anger which might take possession of him, any pity which might move him, would only increase this hilarity of his muscles. If he wept, he laughed; and whatever Gwynplaine was, whatever he wished to be, whatever he thought, the moment that he raised his head, the crowd, if crowd there was, had before them one impersonation: an overwhelming burst of laughter.

It was like a head of Medusa, but Medusa hilarious.

All feeling or thought in the mind of the spectator was suddenly put to flight by the unexpected apparition, and laughter was inevitable. Antique art formerly placed on the outsides of the Greek theatre a joyous brazen face, called Comedy. It laughed and occasioned laughter, but remained pensive. All parody which borders on folly, all irony which borders on wisdom, were condensed and amalgamated in that face. The burden of care, of disillusion, anxiety, and grief, were expressed in its impassive countenance, and resulted in a lugubrious sum of mirth. One corner of the mouth was raised, in mockery of the human race; the other side, in blasphemy of the gods. Men confronted that model of the ideal sarcasm and exemplification of the irony which each one possesses within him; and the crowd, continually renewed round its fixed laugh, died away with delight before its sepulchral immobility of mirth.

One might almost have said that Gwynplaine was that dark, dead mask of ancient comedy, adjusted to the body of a living man. That infernal head of implacable hilarity he supported on his neck. What a weight for the shoulders of a man—an everlasting laugh!

An everlasting laugh!

Let us understand each other; we will explain. The Manicheans believed the absolute occasionally gives way, and that God himself sometimes abdicates for a time. So also of the will. We do not admit that it can ever be utterly powerless. The whole of existence resembles a letter modified in the postscript. For Gwynplaine the postscript was this: by the force of his will, and by concentrating all his attention, and

on condition that no emotion should come to distract and turn away the fixedness of his effort, he could manage to suspend the everlasting rictus of his face, and to throw over it a kind of tragic veil, and then the spectator laughed no longer; he shuddered.

This exertion Gwynplaine scarcely ever made. It was a terrible effort and an insupportable tension. Moreover, it happened that on the slightest distraction, or the slightest emotion, the laugh, driven back for a moment, returned like a tide with an impulse which was irresistible in proportion to the force of the adverse emotion.

With this exception, Gwynplaine's laugh was everlasting.

On seeing Gwynplaine, all laughed. When they had laughed they turned away their heads. Women especially shrank from him with horror. The man was frightful. The joyous convulsion of laughter was as a tribute paid; they submitted to it gladly, but almost mechanically. Besides, when once the novelty of the laugh had passed over, Gwynplaine was intolerable for a woman to see, and impossible to contemplate.

But he was tall, well-made, agile, and no way deformed, excepting in his face.

This led to the presumption that Gwynplaine was rather a creation of art than a work of nature. Gwynplaine, beautiful in figure, had probably been beautiful in face. At his birth he had no doubt resembled other infants. They had left the body intact, and retouched only the face.

Gwynplaine had been made to order,—at least, that was probable. They had left him his teeth; teeth are necessary to a laugh. The death's head retains them. The operation performed on him must have been frightful. That he had no remembrance of it was no proof that it had not taken place. Surgical sculpture of the kind could never have succeeded except on a very young child, and consequently on one having little consciousness of what happened to him, and who might easily take a wound for a sickness. Besides, we must remember that they had in those times means of putting patients to sleep, and of suppressing all suffering; only then it was called magic, while now it is called anæsthesia.

Besides this face, those who had brought him up had given him the resources of a gymnast, and an athlete. His articulations usefully displaced and fashioned to bending the wrong way, had received the education of a clown, and could, like the hinges of a door, move backwards and forwards. In appropriating him to the profession of mountebank nothing had been neglected. His hair had been dyed with ochre once for all; a secret which has been rediscovered at the present day.

Pretty women use it, and that which was formerly considered ugly is now considered an embellishment. Gwynplaine had yellow hair. His hair having probably been dyed with some corrosive preparation, had left it woolly and rough to the touch. Its yellow bristles, rather a mane than a head of hair, covered and concealed a lofty brow, evidently made to contain thought. The operation, whatever it had been, which had deprived his features of harmony, and put all their flesh into disorder, had had no effect on the bony structure of his head. The facial angle was powerful and surprisingly grand. Behind his laugh there was a soul, dreaming, as all our souls dream.

However, his laugh was to Gwynplaine quite a talent. He could do nothing with it, so he turned it to account. By means of it he gained his living.

Gwynplaine, as you have doubtless already guessed, was the child abandoned one winter evening on the coast of Portland, and received into a poor caravan at Weymouth.



DEA.

CHAPTER II

DEA

THAT boy was at this time a man. Fifteen years had elapsed. It was in 1705. Gwynplaine was in his twenty-fifth year.

Ursus had kept the two children with him. They were a group of wanderers. Ursus and Homo had aged. Ursus had become quite bald. The wolf was growing gray. The age of wolves is not ascertained like that of dogs. According to Molière, there are wolves which live to eighty, amongst others the little koupara, and the rank wolf, the *Canis nubilus* of Say.

The little girl found on the dead woman was now a tall creature of sixteen, with brown hair, slight, fragile, almost trembling from delicacy, and almost inspiring fear lest she should break; admirably beautiful, her eyes full of light, yet blind.

That fatal winter night which threw down the beggar woman and her infant in the snow had struck a double blow. It had killed the mother and blinded the child. Gutta serena had forever paralyzed the eyes of the girl, now become woman in her turn.

On her face, through which the light of day never passed, the depressed corners of the mouth indicated the bitterness of the privation. Her eyes, large and clear, had a strange quality: extinguished forever to her, to others they were brilliant. They were mysterious torches lighting only the outside. They gave light, but possessed it not. These sightless eyes were resplendent. A captive of shadow, she lighted up the dull place she inhabited. From the depth of her incurable darkness, from behind the black wall called blindness, she flung her rays. She saw not the sun without, but her soul was perceptible from within.

In her dead look there was a celestial earnestness. She was the night, and from the irremediable darkness with which she was amalgamated, she came out a star.

Ursus, with his mania for Latin names, had christened her Dea. He had taken his wolf into consultation. He had said to him, "You represent man, I represent the beasts. We are of the lower world, this little one shall represent the world on high. Such feebleness is all-powerful. In this manner the universe shall be complete in our hut in its three orders,—human, animal, and Divine." The wolf made no objection.

Therefore the foundling was called Dea.

As to Gwynplaine, Ursus had not had the trouble of inventing a name for him. The morning of the day on which he had realized the disfigurement of the little boy and the blindness of the infant, he had asked him, "Boy, what is your name?" and the boy had answered, "They call me Gwynplaine."

"Be Gwynplaine then," said Ursus.

Dea assisted Gwynplaine in his performances.

If human misery could be summed up, it might have been summed up in Gwynplaine and Dea. Each seemed born in a compartment of the sepulchre; Gwynplaine in the horrible, Dea in the darkness. Their existences were shadowed by two different kinds of darkness, taken from the two formidable sides of night. Dea had that shadow in her, Gwynplaine had it on him. There was a phantom in Dea, a spectre in Gwynplaine. Dea was sunk in the mournful, Gwynplaine in something worse. There was for Gwynplaine, who could see, a heart-rending possibility that existed not for Dea, who was blind; he could compare himself with other men. Now, in a situation such as that of Gwynplaine, admitting that he should seek to examine it, to compare himself with others was to understand himself no more. To have, like Dea, empty sight from which the world is absent, is a supreme distress, yet less than to be an enigma to one's self; to feel that something is wanting here as well, and that something, one's self; to see the universe and not to see one's self. Dea had a veil over her, the night; Gwynplaine a mask, his face. Inexpressible fact, it was by his own flesh that Gwynplaine was masked! What his visage had been, he knew not. His face had vanished. They had affixed to him a false self. He had for a face, a disappearance. His head lived, his face was dead. He never remembered to have seen it. Mankind was for Gwynplaine, as for Dea, an exterior fact. It was far-off. She was alone, he was alone. The isolation of Dea was funereal, she saw nothing; that of Gwynplaine sinister, he saw all things. For Dea creation never passed the bounds of touch and hearing; reality was bounded, limited, short, immediately lost. Nothing was infinite to her but darkness. For Gwynplaine to live was to have the crowd forever before him and outside him. Dea was the proscribed

from light, Gwynplaine the banned of life. They were beyond the pale of hope, and had reached the depth of possible calamity; they had sunk into it, both of them. An observer who had watched them would have felt his reverie melt into immeasurable pity. What must they not have suffered! The decree of misfortune weighed visibly on these human creatures, and never had fate encompassed two beings who had done nothing to deserve it, and more clearly turned destiny into torture, and life into hell.

They were in a Paradise.

They were in love.

Gwynplaine adored Dea. Dea idolized Gwynplaine.

"How beautiful you are!" she would say to him.

CHAPTER III

"OCULOS NON HABET, ET VIDET"

NLY one woman on earth saw Gwynplaine.

It was the blind girl. She had learned what Gwynplaine had done for her, from Ursus, to whom he had related his rough journey from Portland to Weymouth, and the many sufferings which he had endured when deserted by the gang. She knew that when she was an infant dying upon her dead mother, sucking a corpse, a being scarcely bigger than herself had taken her up; that this being, exiled, and, as it were, buried under the refusal of the universe to aid him, had heard her cry; that all the world being deaf to him, he had not been deaf to her; that the child, alone, weak, cast off, without resting-place here below, dragging himself over the waste, exhausted by fatigue, crushed, had accepted from the hands of night a burden, another child; that he, who had nothing to expect in that obscure distribution which we call fate, had charged himself with a destiny; that naked, in anguish and distress, he had made himself a Providence; that when Heaven had closed he had opened his heart; that, himself lost, he had saved; that having neither roof-tree nor shelter, he had been an asylum; that he had made himself mother and nurse; that he who was alone in the world had responded to desertion by adoption; that lost in the darkness he had given an example; that, as if not already sufficiently burdened, he had added to his load another's misery; that in this world, which seemed to contain nothing for him, he had found a duty; that where every one else would have hesitated, he had advanced; that where every one else would have drawn back, he consented; that he had put his hand into the jaws of the grave and drawn out her—Dea. That, himself half naked, he had given her his rags, because she was cold; that famished, he had thought of giving her food and drink; that for one little creature, another little creature had com-

bated death; that he had fought it under every form; under the form of winter and snow, under the form of solitude, under the form of terror, under the form of cold, hunger, and thirst, under the form of whirlwind; and that for her, Dea, this Titan of ten had given battle to the immensity of night. She knew that as a child he had done this, and that now as a man, he was strength to her weakness, riches to her poverty, healing to her sickness, and sight to her blindness. Through the mist of the unknown by which she felt herself encompassed, she distinguished clearly his devotion, his abnegation, his courage. Heroism in immaterial regions has an outline; she distinguished this sublime outline. In the inexpressible abstraction in which thought lives unlighted by the sun, Dea perceived this mysterious lineament of virtue. In the surrounding of dark things put in motion, which was the only impression made on her by reality; in the uneasy stagnation of a creature, always passive, yet always on the watch for possible evil; in the sensation of being ever defenseless, which is the life of the blind; she felt Gwynplaine above her; Gwynplaine never cold, never absent, never obscured; Gwynplaine sympathetic, helpful, and sweet-tempered. Dea quivered with certainty and gratitude, her anxiety changed into ecstasy, and with her shadowy eyes she contemplated on the zenith from the depth of her abyss, the rich light of his goodness.

In the ideal, kindness is the sun; and Gwynplaine dazzled Dea.

To the crowd, which has too many heads to have a thought, and too many eyes to have a sight—to the crowd who, superficial themselves, judge only of the surface, Gwynplaine was a clown, a merry-andrew, a mountebank, a creature grotesque, a little more and a little less than a beast. The crowd knew only the face.

For Dea, Gwynplaine was the savior who had gathered her into his arms in the tomb, and borne her out of it; the consoler who made life tolerable; the liberator, whose hand, holding her own, guided her through that labyrinth called blindness. Gwynplaine was her brother, friend, guide, support; the personification of heavenly power, the husband, winged and resplendent. Where the multitude saw the monster, Dea recognized the archangel.

It was that Dea, blind, perceived his soul.

CHAPTER IV

WELL-MATCHED LOVERS

RSUS being a philosopher, understood. He approved of the fascination of Dea.

The blind see the invisible.

He said: conscience is vision.

Then, looking at Gwynplaine, he murmured: semi-monster, but demi-god.

Gwynplaine, on the other hand, was madly in love with Dea.

There is the invisible eye, the spirit, and the visible eye, the pupil. He saw her with the visible eye. Dea was dazzled by the ideal; Gwynplaine, by the real. Gwynplaine was not ugly; he was frightful. He saw his contrast before him: in proportion as he was terrible, Dea was sweet. He was horror; she was grace. Dea was his dream. She seemed a vision scarcely embodied. There was in her whole person, in her Grecian form, in her fine and supple figure, swaying like a reed; in her shoulders, on which might have been invisible wings; in the modest curves which indicated her sex, to the soul rather than to the senses; in her fairness, which amounted almost to transparency; in the august and reserved serenity of her look, divinely shut out from earth; in the sacred innocence of her smile, she was almost an angel, and yet just a woman.

Gwynplaine, we have said, compared himself and compared Dea.

His existence, such as it was, was the result of a double and unheard-of choice. It was the point of intersection of two rays; one from below and one from above—a black and a white ray. To the same crumb, perhaps pecked at, at once, by the beaks of evil and good, one gave the bite, the other the kiss. Gwynplaine was this crumb—an atom, wounded and caressed. Gwynplaine was the product of fatality combined with Providence. Misfortune had placed its finger on him;

happiness as well. Two extreme destinies composed his strange lot. He had on him an anathema and a benediction. He was the elect, cursed. Who was he? He knew not. When he looked at himself, he saw one he knew not; but this unknown was a monster. Gwynplaine lived as it were beheaded, with a face which did not belong to him. This face was frightful, so frightful that it was absurd. It caused as much fear as laughter. It was a hell-concocted absurdity. It was the shipwreck of a human face into the mask of an animal. Never had been seen so total an eclipse of humanity in a human face; never parody more complete; never had apparition more frightful grinned in nightmare; never had everything repulsive to woman been more hideously amalgamated in a man. The unfortunate heart, masked and calumniated by the face, seemed forever condemned to solitude under it, as under a tombstone. Yet no! Where unknown malice had done its worst, invisible goodness had lent its aid. In the poor fallen one, suddenly raised up, by the side of the repulsive, it had placed the attractive; on the barren shoal it had set the loadstone; it had caused a soul to fly with swift wings towards the deserted one; it had sent the dove to console the creature whom the thunderbolt had overwhelmed, and had made beauty adore deformity.

For this to be possible it was necessary that beauty should not see the disfigurement. For this good fortune, misfortune was required. Providence had made Dea blind.

Gwynplaine vaguely felt himself the object of a redemption. Why had he been persecuted? He knew not. Why redeemed? He knew not. All he knew was that a halo had encircled his brand. When Gwynplaine had been old enough to understand, Ursus had read and explained to him the text of Doctor Conquest *de Denasatis*, and in another folio, Hugo Plagon, the passage, *Nares habens mutilas;* but Ursus had prudently abstained from "hypotheses," and had been reserved in his opinion of what it might mean. Suppositions were possible. The probability of violence inflicted on Gwynplaine when an infant was hinted at, but for Gwynplaine the result was the only evidence. His destiny was to live under a stigma. Why this stigma? There was no answer.

Silence and solitude were around Gwynplaine. All was uncertain in the conjectures which could be fitted to the tragical reality; excepting the terrible fact, nothing was certain. In his discouragement Dea intervened a sort of celestial interposition between him and despair. He perceived, melted and inspirited by the sweetness of the beautiful girl who turned to him, that, horrible as he was, a beautified wonder affected his monstrous visage. Having been fashioned to create dread, he was

the object of a miraculous exception, that it was admired and adored in the ideal by the light; and, monster that he was, he felt himself the contemplation of a star.

Gwynplaine and Dea were a pair, and these two suffering hearts adored each other. One nest and two birds, that was their story. They had begun to feel a universal law—to please, to seek, and to find each other.

Thus hatred had made a mistake. The persecutors of Gwynplaine, whoever they might have been—the deadly enigma, from wherever it came, had missed their aim. They had intended to drive him to desperation; they had succeeded in driving him into enchantment. They had affianced him beforehand to a healing wound. They had predestined him for consolation by an affliction. The pincers of the executioner had softly changed into the delicately-moulded hand of a girl. Gwynplaine was horrible; artificially horrible—made horrible by the hand of man. They had hoped to exile him forever: first, from his family, if his family existed, and then from humanity. When an infant, they had made him a ruin; of this ruin Nature had repossessed herself, as she does of all ruins. This solitude Nature had consoled, as she consoles all solitudes. Nature comes to the succor of the deserted; where all is lacking, she gives back her whole self. She flourishes and grows green amid ruins; she has ivy for the stones and love for man.

Profound generosity of the shadows!



CHAPTER V

THE BLUE SKY THROUGH THE BLACK CLOUD

THUS lived these unfortunate creatures together, Dea, relying; Gwynplaine, accepted.

These orphans were all in all to each other, the feeble and the deformed. The widowed were betrothed. An inexpressible thanksgiving arose out of their distress. They were grateful.

To whom?

To the obscure immensity. Be grateful in your own hearts. That suffices. Thanksgiving has wings, and flies to its right destination. Your prayer knows its way better than you can.

How many men have believed that they prayed to Jupiter, when they prayed to Jehovah! How many believers in amulets are listened to by the Almighty! How many atheists there are who know not that, in the simple fact of being good and sad, they pray to God!

Gwynplaine and Dea were grateful.

Deformity is expulsion. Blindness is a precipice. The expelled one had been adopted; the precipice was habitable.

Gwynplaine had seen a brilliant light descending on him, in an arrangement of destiny which seemed to put, in the perspective of a dream, a white cloud of beauty having the form of a woman, a radiant vision in which there was a heart; and the phantom, almost a cloud and yet a woman, clasped him; and the apparition embraced him; and the heart desired him. Gwynplaine was no longer deformed. He was beloved. The rose demanded the caterpillar in marriage, feeling that within the caterpillar there was a divine butterfly. Gwynplaine the rejected, was chosen.

To have one's desire is everything. Gwynplaine had his, Dea hers.

The abjection of the disfigured man was exalted and dilated into intoxication, into delight, into belief; and a hand was stretched out

towards the melancholy hesitation of the blind girl, to guide her in her darkness.

It was the penetration of two misfortunes into the ideal, which absorbed them. The rejected found a refuge in each other. Two blanks, combining, filled each other up. They held together by what they lacked: in that in which one was poor, the other was rich. The misfortune of the one made the treasure of the other. Had Dea not been blind, would she have chosen Gwynplaine? Had Gwynplaine not been disfigured, would he have preferred Dea? She would probably have rejected the deformed, as he would have passed by the infirm. What happiness for Dea that Gwynplaine was hideous! What good fortune for Gwynplaine that Dea was blind! Apart from their providential matching, they were impossible to each other. A mighty want of each other was at the bottom of their loves. Gwynplaine saved Dea. Dea saved Gwynplaine. Apposition of misery produced adherence. It was the embrace of those swallowed in the abyss; none closer, none more hopeless, none more exquisite.

Gwynplaine had a thought.

"What should I be without her?"

Dea had a thought.

"What should I be without him?"

The exile of each made a country for both. The two incurable fatalities, the stigmata of Gwynplaine and the blindness of Dea, joined them together in contentment. They sufficed to each othe They imagined nothing beyond each other. To speak to one another was a delight, to approach was beatitude; by force of reciprocal intuition they became united in the same reverie, and thought the same thoughts. In Gwynplaine's tread, Dea believed that she heard the step of one deified. They tightened their mutual grasp in a sort of sidereal *chiaroscuro*, full of perfumes, of gleams, of music, of the luminous architecture of dreams. They belonged to each other; they knew themselves to be forever united in the same joy and the same ecstasy; and nothing could be stranger than this construction of an Eden by two of the damned.

They were inexpressibly happy.

In their hell they had created heaven. Such was thy power, O Love! Dea heard Gwynplaine's laugh; Gwynplaine saw Dea's smile. Thus ideal felicity was found, the perfect joy of life was realized, the mysterious problem of happiness was solved; and by whom? By two outcasts.

For Gwynplaine, Dea was splendor. For Dea, Gwynplaine was presence. Presence is that profound mystery which renders the invisible world divine, and from which results that other mystery,—confi-

dence. In religions this is the only thing which is irreducible; but this irreducible thing suffices. The great motive power is not seen; it is felt.

Gwynplaine was the religion of Dea.

Sometimes, lost in her sense of love toward him, she knelt, like a beautiful priestess before a gnome in a pagoda, made happy by her adoration.



Imagine to yourself an abyss, and in its centre an oasis of light, and in this oasis two creatures shut out of life, dazzling each other.

No purity could be compared to their loves. Dea was ignorant what a kiss might be, though, perhaps, she desired it; because blindness, especially in a woman, has its dreams, and though trembling at the approaches of the unknown, does not fear them all. As to Gwynplaine, his sensitive youth made him pensive. The more delirious he felt, the more timid he became. He might have dared anything with this companion of his early youth, with this creature as innocent of fault as of the light, with this blind girl who saw but one thing—that she adored him! But he would have thought it a theft to take what she might have given; so he resigned himself with a melancholy satisfaction to love angelically, and the conviction of his deformity resolved itself into a proud purity.

These happy creatures dwelt in the ideal. They were spouses in it at distances as opposite as the spheres. They exchanged in its firmament the deep effluvium which is in infinity attraction, and on earth the sexes. Their kisses were the kisses of souls.

They had always lived a common life. They knew themselves only in each other's society. The infancy of Dea had coincided with the youth of Gwynplaine. They had grown up side by side. For a long time they had slept in the same bed, for the hut was not a large bedchamber. They lay on the chest, Ursus on the floor; that was the arrangement. One fine day, whilst Dea was still very little, Gwynplaine felt himself grown up, and it was in the youth that shame arose. He said to Ursus, "I will also sleep on the floor." And at night, he stretched himself, with the old man, on the bear-skin. Then Dea wept. She cried for her bed-fellow; but Gwynplaine, become restless because he had begun to love, decided to remain where he was. From that time he always slept by the side of Ursus on the planks. In the summer, when the nights were fine, he slept outside with Homo.

When thirteen Dea had not yet become resigned to the arrangement. Often in the evening she said, "Gwynplaine, come close to me; that will put me to sleep." A man lying by her side was a necessity to her innocent slumbers.

Nudity is to see that one is naked. She ignored nudity. It was the ingenuousness of Arcadia or Otaheite. Dea untaught, made Gwynplaine wild. Sometimes it happened that Dea, when almost reaching youth, combed her long hair as she sat on her bed—her chemise unfastened and falling off revealed indications of a feminine outline, and a vague commencement of Eve—and would call Gwynplaine. Gwynplaine blushed, lowered his eyes, and knew not what to do in presence of this innocent creature. Stammering, he turned his head, feared, and fled. The Daphnis of darkness took flight before the Chloe of shadow.

Such was the idyll blooming in a tragedy.

Ursus said to them:

"Old brutes! adore each other!"

CHAPTER VI

URSUS AS TUTOR, AND URSUS AS GUARDIAN



URSUS added:

"Some of these days I will play them a nasty trick. I will marry them."

Ursus taught Gwynplaine the theory of love. He said to him:

"Do you know how the Almighty lights the fire called love? He places the woman underneath, the devil between, and the man at the top. A match—that is to say, a look—and behold, it is all on fire."

"A look is unnecessary," answered Gwynplaine, thinking of Dea.

And Ursus replied:

"Booby! do souls require mortal eyes to see each other?"

Ursus was a good fellow at times. Gwynplaine, sometimes madly in love with Dea, became melancholy, and made use of the presence of Ursus as a guard on himself. One day Ursus said to him:

"Bah! do not put yourself out. When in love, the cock shows himself."

"But the eagle conceals himself," replied Gwynplaine.

At other times Ursus would say to himself, apart:

"It is wise to put spokes in the wheels of the Cytherean car. They love each other too much. This may have its disadvantages. Let us avoid a fire. Let us moderate these hearts."

Then Ursus had recourse to warnings of this nature, speaking to Gwynplaine when Dea slept, and to Dea when Gwynplaine's back was turned:

"Dea, you must not be so fond of Gwynplaine. To live in the life of another is perilous. Egoism is a good root of happiness. Men escape from women. And then Gwynplaine might end by becoming infatuated

with you. His success is so great! You have no idea how great his success is!"

"Gwynplaine, disproportions are no good. So much ugliness on one side and so much beauty on another, ought to compel reflection. Temper your ardor, my boy. Do not become too enthusiastic about Dea. Do you seriously consider that you are made for her? Just think of your deformity and her perfection! See the distance between her and yourself. She has everything, this Dea. What a white skin! What hair! Lips like strawberries! And her foot! her hand! Those shoulders, with their exquisite curve! Her expression is sublime. She walks diffusing light; and in speaking, the grave tone of her voice is charming. But for all this, to think that she is a woman! She would not be such a fool as to be an angel. She is absolute beauty. Repeat all this to yourself, to calm your ardor."

These speeches redoubled the love of Gwynplaine and Dea, and Ursus was astonished at his want of success, just as one who should say, "It is singular that with all the oil I throw on fire, I cannot extinguish it."

Did he, then, desire to extinguish their love, or to cool it even?

Certainly not. He would have been well punished had he succeeded. At the bottom of his heart this love, which was flame for them and warmth for him, was his delight.

But it is natural to grate a little against that which charms us; men call it wisdom.

Ursus had been, in his relations with Gwynplaine and Dea, almost a father and a mother. Grumbling all the while, he had brought them up; grumbling all the while, he had nourished them. His adoption of them had made the hut roll more heavily, and he had been oftener compelled to harness himself by Homo's side, to help to draw it.

We may observe, however, that after the first few years, when Gwynplaine was nearly grown up, and Ursus had grown quite old, Gwynplaine had taken his turn and drawn Ursus.

Ursus, seeing that Gwynplaine was becoming a man, had cast the horoscope of his deformity. "*It has made your fortune!*" he had told him.

This family of an old man and two children, with a wolf, had become, as they wandered, a group more and more intimately united. Their errant life had not hindered education. "To wander is to grow," Ursus said. Gwynplaine was evidently made to exhibit at fairs. Ursus had cultivated in him feats of dexterity, and had incrusted him as much as possible with all he himself possessed of science and wisdom.

Ursus, contemplating the perplexing mask of Gwynplaine's face, often growled:

"He has begun well." It was for this reason that he had perfected him with every ornament of philosophy and wisdom.

He repeated constantly to Gwynplaine:



"Be a philosopher. To be wise is to be invulnerable. You see what I am. I have never shed a tear. This is the result of my wisdom. Do you think that occasion for tears has been wanting had I felt disposed to weep?"

Ursus, in one of his monologues in the hearing of the wolf, said:

"I have taught Gwynplaine everything, Latin included. I have taught Dea nothing, music included."

He had taught them both to sing. He had himself a pretty talent for playing on the oaten reed, a little flute of that period. He played on it agreeably, as also on the *chiffonie*, a sort of beggar's hurdy-gurdy, mentioned in the Chronicle of Bertrand Duguesclin as the "truant instrument," which started the symphony. These instruments attracted the crowd. Ursus would show them the chiffonie, and say, "It is called *organistrum* in Latin."

He had taught Dea and Gwynplaine to sing according to the method of Orpheus and of Egide Binchois. Frequently he interrupted the lessons with cries of enthusiasm, such as, "Orpheus, musician of Greece! Binchois, musician of Picardy!"

These branches of careful culture did not occupy the children so as to prevent their adoring each other. They had mingled their hearts together as they grew up, as two saplings planted near, mingled their branches as they become trees.

"No matter," said Ursus. "I will marry them."

Then he grumbled to himself:

"They are quite tiresome with their love."

The past, their little past, at least, had no existence for Dea and Gwynplaine. They knew only what Ursus had told them of it. They called Ursus father. The only remembrance which Gwynplaine had of his infancy was as of a passage of demons over his cradle. He had an impression of having been trodden in the darkness under deformed feet. Was this intentional or not? He was ignorant on this point. That which he remembered clearly, and to the slightest detail, were his tragical adventures when deserted at Portland. The finding of Dea made the dismal night a radiant date for him.

The memory of Dea, even more than that of Gwynplaine, was lost in clouds. In so young a child all remembrance melts away. She recollected her mother as something cold. Had she ever seen the sun? Perhaps so. She made efforts to pierce into the blank which was her past life.

"The sun!—what was it?"

She had some vague memory of a thing luminous and warm, of which Gwynplaine had taken the place.

They spoke to each other in low tones. It is certain that cooing is the most important thing in the world. Dea often said to Gwynplaine:

"Light means that you are speaking."

Once, no longer containing himself, as he saw through a muslin sleeve the arm of Dea, Gwynplaine brushed its transparency with his lips; ideal kiss of a deformed mouth! Dea felt a deep delight; she

blushed like a rose. This kiss from a monster made Aurora gleam on that beautiful brow full of night. However, Gwynplaine sighed with a kind of terror, and as the neckerchief of Dea gaped, he could not refrain from looking at the whiteness visible through that glimpse of Paradise.



Dea pulled up her sleeve, and stretching towards Gwynplaine her naked arm, said:

"Again!".

Gwynplaine fled.

The next day the game was renewed, with variations.

It was a heavenly subsidence into that sweet abyss, called love.

At such things, heaven smiles philosophically.

CHAPTER VII

BLINDNESS GIVES LESSONS IN CLAIRVOYANCE

T times Gwynplaine reproached himself. He made his happiness a case of conscience. He fancied that to allow a woman who could not see him to love him, was to deceive her.

What would she have said could she have suddenly obtained her sight? How she would have felt repulsed by what had previously attracted her! How she would have recoiled from her frightful loadstone! What a cry! What covering of her face! What a flight! A bitter scruple harassed him. He told himself that such a monster as he had no right to love. He was a hydra idolized by a star. It was his duty to enlighten the blind star.

One day he said to Dea:

"You know that I am very ugly."

"I know that you are sublime," she answered.

He resumed:

"When you hear all the world laugh, they laugh at me because I am horrible."

"I love you," said Dea.

After a silence, she added:

"I was in death, you brought me to life. When you are here, heaven is by my side. Give me your hand, that I may touch heaven."

Their hands met and grasped each other. They spoke no more, but were silent in the plenitude of love.

Ursus, who was crabbed, had overheard this. The next day when the three were together, he said:

"For that matter, Dea is ugly also."

The word produced no effect. Dea and Gwynplaine were not

listening. Absorbed in each other, they rarely heeded such exclamations of Ursus. Their depth was a dead loss.

This time, however, the precaution of Ursus, "Dea is also ugly," indicated in this learned man a certain knowledge of women. It is certain that Gwynplaine, in his loyalty, had been guilty of an imprudence. To have said, *I am ugly*, to any other blind girl than Dea, might have been dangerous. To be blind, and in love, is to be twofold blind. In such a situation, dreams are dreamt. Illusion is the food of dreams. Take illusion from love, and you take from it its aliment. It



is compounded of every enthusiasm, of both physical and moral admiration.

Moreover, you should never tell a woman a word difficult to understand. She will dream about it, and she often dreams falsely. An enigma in a reverie spoils it. The shock caused by the fall of a careless word displaces that against which it strikes. At times it happens, without our knowing why, that because we have received the obscure blow of a chance word, the heart empties itself insensibly of love. He who loves, perceives a decline in his happiness. Nothing is to be feared more than this slow exudation from the fissure in the vase.

Happily, Dea was not formed of such clay. The stuff of which

other women are made had not been used in her construction. She had a rare nature. The frame, but not the heart, was fragile. A divine perseverance in love, was in the heart of her being.

The whole disturbance which the word used by Gwynplaine had produced in her, ended in her saying one day:

"To be ugly—what is it? It is to do wrong. Gwynplaine only does good. He is handsome."

Then, under the form of interrogation so familiar to children and to the blind, she resumed:

"To see?—what is it that you call seeing. For my own part, I cannot see; I know. It seems that *to see*, means to hide."

"What do you mean?" said Gwynplaine.

Dea answered:

"To see, is a thing which conceals the true."

"No," said Gwynplaine.

"But yes," replied Dea, "since you say you are ugly."

She reflected a moment, and then said:

"Story teller!"

Gwynplaine felt the joy of having confessed, and of not being believed. Both his conscience and his love were consoled.

Thus they had reached, Dea sixteen, Gwynplaine nearly twenty-five.

They were not, as it would now be expressed, "more advanced" than the first day. Less even; for it may be remembered that on their wedding night she was nine months and he ten years old. A sort of holy childhood had continued in their love. Thus it sometimes happens that the belated nightingale prolongs her nocturnal song till dawn.

Their caresses went no further than pressing hands, or lips brushing a naked arm. Soft, half articulate, whispers sufficed them.

Twenty-four and sixteen! So it happened that Ursus, who did not lose sight of the ill-turn he intended to do them, said:

"One of these days you must choose a religion."

"Wherefore?" inquired Gwynplaine.

"That you may marry."

"That is already done," said Dea.

Dea did not understand that they could be more man and wife than they were already.

At bottom, this chimerical and virginal content, this innocent union of souls, this celibacy taken for marriage, was not displeasing to Ursus. He had said what he had said because he thought it necessary. But the medical knowledge he possessed convinced him that Dea, if not too young, was too fragile and delicate for what he called "Hymen in flesh and bone."

That would come soon enough.

Besides, were they not already married? If the indissoluble existed anywhere, was it not in their union? Gwynplaine and Dea! They were creatures worthy of the love they mutually felt, flung by misfortune into each other's arms.

And as if they were not enough in this first link, love had survened on misfortune, and had attached them, united and bound them together. What power could ever break that iron chain, bound with knots of flowers? They were indeed bound together.

Dea had beauty, Gwynplaine had sight. Each brought a dowry. They were more than coupled; they were paired; separated solely by the sacred interposition of innocence.

Though dream as Gwynplaine would, however, and absorb all meaner passions as he could, in the contemplation of Dea and before the tribunal of conscience, he was a man. Fatal laws are not to be eluded. He underwent, like everything else in nature, the obscure fermentations willed by the Creator. At times, therefore, he looked at the women who were in the crowd, but he immediately felt that the look was a sin, and hastened to retire, repentant, into his own soul.

Let us add that he met with no encouragement. On the face of every woman who looked upon him, he saw aversion, antipathy, repugnance, and rejection.

It was clear that no other than Dea was possible for him. This aided his repentance.

CHAPTER VIII

NOT ONLY HAPPINESS, BUT PROSPERITY

HAT true things are told in stories! The burnt scar of the invisible fiend who has touched you, is remorse for a wicked thought.

In Gwynplaine evil thoughts never ripened, and he had therefore no remorse. Sometimes he felt regret.

Vague mists of conscience.

What was this? Nothing.

Their happiness was complete; so complete, that they were no longer even poor.

From 1689 to 1704 a great change had taken place.

It happened sometimes in the year 1704, that as night fell on some little village on the coast, a great, heavy van, drawn by a pair of stout horses, made its entry. It was like the shell of a vessel reversed, the keel for a roof, the deck for a floor, placed on four wheels. The wheels were all of the same size, and high as wagon wheels. Wheels, pole, and van were all painted green, with a rhythmical gradation of shades, which ranged from bottle green for the wheels, to apple green for the roofing.

This green color had succeeded in drawing attention to the carriage, which was known in all the fair grounds as The Green Box. The Green Box had but two windows, one at each extremity, and at the back a door with steps to let down. On the roof, from a tube painted green like the rest, smoke arose. This moving house was always varnished and washed afresh. In front, on a ledge fastened to the van, with the window for a door, behind the horses and by the side of an old man who held the reins and directed the team, two gypsy women, dressed as goddesses, sounded their trumpets. The astonishment with which the villagers regarded this machine was overwhelming.

This was the old establishment of Ursus, its proportions augmented by success, and improved from a wretched booth into a theatre.

A kind of animal, between dog and wolf, was chained under the van.

This was Homo.



The old coachman who drove the horses was the philosopher himself.

Whence came his improvement from the miserable hut to the Olympic caravan?

From this; Gwynplaine had become famous.

It was with a correct scent of what would succeed amongst men that Ursus had said to Gwynplaine:

"They made your fortune."

Ursus, it may be remembered, had made Gwynplaine his pupil. Unknown people had worked upon his face; he, on the other hand, had worked on his mind; and behind this well-executed mask, he had placed all that he could of thought. So soon as the growth of the child had rendered him fitted for it, he had brought him out on the stage; that is, he had produced him in front of the van.

The effect of his appearance had been surprising. The passers-by were immediately struck with wonder. Never had anything been seen to be compared to this extraordinary mimic of laughter. They were ignorant how the miracle of infectious hilarity had been obtained. Some believed it to be natural, others declared it to be artificial, and as conjecture was added to reality, everywhere, at every cross-road on the journey, in all the grounds of fairs and fêtes, the crowd ran after Gwynplaine. Thanks to this great attraction, there had come into the poor purse of the wandering group, first a rain of farthings, then of heavy pennies, and finally of shillings.

The curiosity of one place exhausted, they passed on to another. Rolling does not enrich a stone, but it enriches a caravan; and year by year, from city to city, with the increased growth of Gwynplaine's person and of his ugliness, the fortune predicted by Ursus had come.

"What a good turn they did you there, my boy," said Ursus.

This "fortune" had allowed Ursus, who was the administrator of Gwynplaine's success, to have the chariot of his dreams constructed—that is to say, a caravan large enough to carry a theatre, and to sow science and art in the highways. Moreover, Ursus had been able to add to the group composed of himself, Homo, Gwynplaine, and Dea, two horses and two women, who were the goddesses of the troupe, as we have just said, and its servants. A mythological frontispiece was, in those days, of service to a caravan of mountebanks.

"We are a wandering temple," said Ursus.

These two gypsies, picked up by the philosopher from amongst the vagabondage of cities and suburbs, were ugly and young, and were called, by order of Ursus, the one Phœbe, and the other Venus.

For these read Fibi and Vinos, that we may conform to English pronunciation.

Phœbe cooked; Venus scrubbed the temple.

Moreover, on days of performance they dressed Dea.

Mountebanks have their public life as well as princes, and on these occasions Dea was arrayed, like Fibi and Vinos, in a Florentine petticoat of flowered stuff, and a woman's jacket without sleeves, leaving the arms bare. Ursus and Gwynplaine wore men's jackets, and, like

sailors on board a man-of-war, great loose trousers. Gwynplaine had, besides, for his work and for his feats of strength, round his neck and over his shoulders, an esclavine of leather. He took charge of the horses. Ursus and Homo took charge of each other.



Dea, being used to the Green Box, came and went in the interior of the wheeled house, with almost as much ease and certainty as those who saw.

The eye which could penetrate within this structure and its internal arrangements, might have perceived in a corner, fastened to the planks, and immovable on its four wheels, the old hut of Ursus, placed on

half-pay, allowed to rust, and from thenceforth dispensed the labor of rolling, as Ursus was relieved from the labor of drawing it.

This hut, in a corner at the back, to the right of the door, served as bed-chamber and dressing-room to Ursus and Gwynplaine. It now contained two beds.

In the opposite corner was the kitchen.

The arrangement of a vessel was not more precise and concise than that of the interior of the Green Box. Everything within it was in its place, arranged, foreseen, and intended.

The caravan was divided into three compartments, partitioned from each other. These communicated by open spaces without doors. A piece of stuff fell over them, and answered the purpose of concealment. The compartment behind belonged to the men, the compartment in front to the women, the compartment in the middle, separating the two sexes, was the stage. The instruments of the orchestra and the properties were kept in the kitchen. A loft under the arch of the roof contained the scenes, and on openiñg a trap-door lamps appeared, producing wonders of light.

Ursus was the poet of these magical representations; he wrote the pieces.

He had a diversity of talents; he was clever at sleight of hand. Besides the voices he imitated, he produced all sorts of unexpected things: shocks of light and darkness; spontaneous formations of figures or words, as he willed, on the partition; vanishing figures in chiaroscuro; strange things, amidst which he seemed to meditate, unmindful of the crowd who marveled at him.

One day Gwynplaine said to him:

"Father, you look like a sorcerer!"

And Ursus replied:

"Then I look, perhaps, like what I am."

The Green Box, built on a clear model of Ursus's, contained this refinement of ingenuity—that between the fore and hind wheels, the central panel of the left side turned on hinges by the aid of chains and pulleys, and could be let down at will like a drawbridge. As it dropped it set at liberty three legs on hinges, which supported the panel when let down, and which placed themselves straight on the ground like the legs of a table, and supported it above the earth like a platform. This exposed the stage, which was thus enlarged by the platform in front.

This opening looked for all the world like a "mouth of hell," in the words of the itinerant Puritan preachers, who turned away from it with horror. It was, perhaps, for some such impious invention that Solon kicked out Thespis.

For all that, Thespis has lasted much longer than is generally believed. The traveling theatre is still in existence. It was on those stages on wheels that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they performed in England the ballets and dances of Amner and Pilkington; in France, the pastorals of Gilbert Colin; in Flanders, at the annual fairs, the double choruses of Clement, called Non Papa; in Germany, the "Adam and Eve" of Theiles; and, in Italy, the Venetian exhibitions of Animuccia and of Ca-Fossis, the "*Silvæ*" of Gesualdo, prince of Venosa, the "*Satyr*," of Laura Guidiccioni, the "*Despair of Philene*," the "*Death of Ugolino*," by Vincent Galileo, father of the astronomer, which Vincent Galileo sang his own music, and accompanied himself on his viol de gamba; as well as all the first attempts of the Italian opera which, from 1580, substituted free inspiration for the madrigal style.

The chariot, of the color of hope, which carried Ursus, Gwynplaine, and their fortunes, and in front of which Fibi and Vinos trumpeted like figures of Fame, played its part of this grand Bohemian and literary brotherhood. Thespis would no more have disowned Ursus, than Congrio would have disowned Gwynplaine.

Arrived at open spaces in towns or villages, Ursus, in the intervals between the too-tooing of Fibi and Vinos, gave instructive revelations as to the trumpetings.

"This symphony is Gregorian," he would exclaim, "citizens and townsmen; the Gregorian form of worship, this great progress, is opposed in Italy to the Ambrosial ritual, and in Spain to the Mozarabic ceremonial, and has achieved its triumph over them with difficulty."

After which the Green Box drew up in some place chosen by Ursus, and evening having fallen, and the panel stage having been let down, the theatre opened and the performance began.

The scene of the Green Box represented a landscape painted by Ursus; and, as he did not know how to paint, it represented a cavern just as well as a landscape.

The curtain, which we call drop nowadays, was a checked silk, with squares of contrasted colors.

The public stood without, in the street, in the fair, forming a semicircle round the stage, exposed to the sun and the showers; an arrangement which made rain less desirable for theatres in those days than now. When they could, they acted in an inn yard, on which occasions the windows of the different stories made rows of boxes for the spectators. The theatre was thus more enclosed, and the audience a more paying one.

Ursus was in everything—in the piece, in the company, in the kitchen, in the orchestra.

Vinos beat the drum, and handled the sticks with great dexterity. Fibi played on the *morache*, a kind of guitar.

The wolf had been promoted to be a utility gentleman, and played, as occasion required, his little parts.

Often when they appeared side by side on the stage, Ursus in his tightly-laced bear's skin, Homo with his wolf's skin fitting still better, no one could tell which was the beast. This flattered Ursus.

CHAPTER IX

ABSURDITIES WHICH FOLKS WITHOUT TASTE CALL POETRY

THE pieces written by Ursus were interludes—a kind of composition out of fashion nowadays. One of these pieces, which has not come down to us, was entitled "*Ursus Rursus.*" It is probable that he played the principal part himself. A pretended exit, followed by a re-appearance, was apparently its praiseworthy and sober subject.

The titles of the interludes of Ursus were sometimes Latin, as we have seen, and the poetry frequently Spanish. The Spanish verses written by Ursus were rhymed, as was nearly all the Castilian poetry of that period. This did not puzzle the people. Spanish was then a familiar language; and the English sailors spoke Castilian even as the Roman sailors spoke Carthaginian (see Plautus). Moreover, at a theatrical representation, as at mass, Latin, or any other language unknown to the audience, is by no means a subject of care with them. They get out of the dilemma by adapting to the sounds familiar words. Our old Gallic France was particularly prone to this manner of being devout. At church, under cover of an *Immolatus*, the faithful chanted, "I will make merry;" and under a *sanctus*, "Kiss me, sweet."

The Council of Trent was required to put an end to these familiarities.

Ursus had composed expressly for Gwynplaine an interlude, with which he was well pleased. It was his best work. He had thrown his whole soul into it. To give the sum of all one's talent in the production is the greatest triumph that any one can achieve. The toad which produces a toad achieves a grand success. You doubt it? Try, then, to do as much.

Ursus had carefully polished this interlude. This bear's cub was entitled "*Chaos Vanquished.*"

Here it was: a night scene.

When the curtain drew up, the crowd, massed around the Green Box, saw nothing but blackness. In this blackness three confused forms moved in the reptile state: a wolf, a bear, and a man. The wolf acted the wolf; Ursus, the bear; Gwynplaine, the man. The wolf and the bear represented the ferocious forces of Nature—unreasoning hunger and savage ignorance. Both rushed on Gwynplaine. It was choas combating man. No face could be distinguished. Gwynplaine fought enfolded in a winding-sheet, and his face was covered by his thickly-falling locks. All else was shadow. The bear growled, the wolf gnashed his teeth, the man cried out. The man was down; the beasts overwhelmed him. He cried for aid and succor; he hurled to the unknown an agonized appeal. He gave a death-rattle. To witness this agony of the prostrate man, now scarcely distinguishable from the brutes, was appalling. The crowd looked on breathless; in one minute more the wild beasts would triumph, and chaos re-absorb man. A struggle—cries—howlings; then, all at once, silence.

A song in the shadows. A breath had passed, and they heard a voice. Mysterious music floated, accompanying this chant of the invisible; and suddenly, none knowing whence or how, a white apparition arose. This apparition was a light; this light was a woman; this woman was a spirit. Dea—calm, fair, beautiful, formidable in her serenity and sweetness—appeared in the centre of a luminous mist. A profile of brightness in a dawn! She was a voice: a voice light, deep, indescribable. She sang in the new-born light; she, invisible, made visible. They thought that they heard the hymn of an angel, or the song of a bird. At this apparition the man, starting up in his ecstasy, struck the beasts with his fists, and overthrew them.

Then the vision, gliding along in a manner difficult to understand, and therefore the more admired, sang these words in Spanish sufficiently pure for the English sailors who were present:

"Ora! llora!
De palabra
Nace razon.
Da luz el son." *

Then, looking down, as if she saw a gulf beneath, she went on:

"Noche, quita te de alli!
El alba canta hallali." †

* Pray! weep! Reason is born of the word. Song creates light.

† Night, away! the dawn sings hallali.

As she sang, the man raised himself by degrees; instead of lying he was now kneeling, his hands elevated towards the vision, his knees resting on the beasts, which lay motionless, and as if thunder-stricken.

She continued, turning towards him:

"Es menester a cielos ir,
Y tu que llorabas reir." *

And approaching him with the majesty of a star, she added:

"Gebra barzon;
Deja, monstro,
A tu negro
Caparazon." †

And she put her hand on his brow. Then another voice arose, deeper, and, consequently, still sweeter—a voice broken and enwrapt with a gravity both tender and wild. It was the human chant responding to the chant of the stars. Gwynplaine, still in obscurity, his head under Dea's hand, and kneeling on the vanquished bear and wolf, sang:

"O ven! ama!
Eres alma,
Soy corazon." ‡

And suddenly from the shadow a ray of light fell full upon Gwynplaine. Then, through the darkness, was the monster fully exposed.

To describe the commotion of the crowd is impossible.

A sun of laughter rising, such was the effect. Laughter springs from unexpected causes, and nothing could be more unexpected than this termination. Never was sensation comparable to that produced by the ray of light striking on that mask, at once ludicrous and terrible. They laughed all around his laugh. Everywhere: above, below, behind, before, at the uttermost distance; men, women, old gray-heads, rosy-faced children; the good, the wicked, the gay, the sad, everybody. And even in the streets, the passers-by who could see nothing, hearing the laughter, laughed also. The laughter ended in clapping of hands and stamping of feet. The curtain dropped, Gwynplaine was recalled with frenzy. Hence an immense success. Have you seen "Chaos Vanquished?" Gwynplaine was run after. The listless came to laugh, the melancholy came to laugh, evil consciences came to laugh—a laugh so irresistible, that it seemed almost an epidemic. But there is a pestilence

* Thou must go to heaven, and smile, thou that weepest.

† Break the yoke; throw off, monster, thy dark clothing.

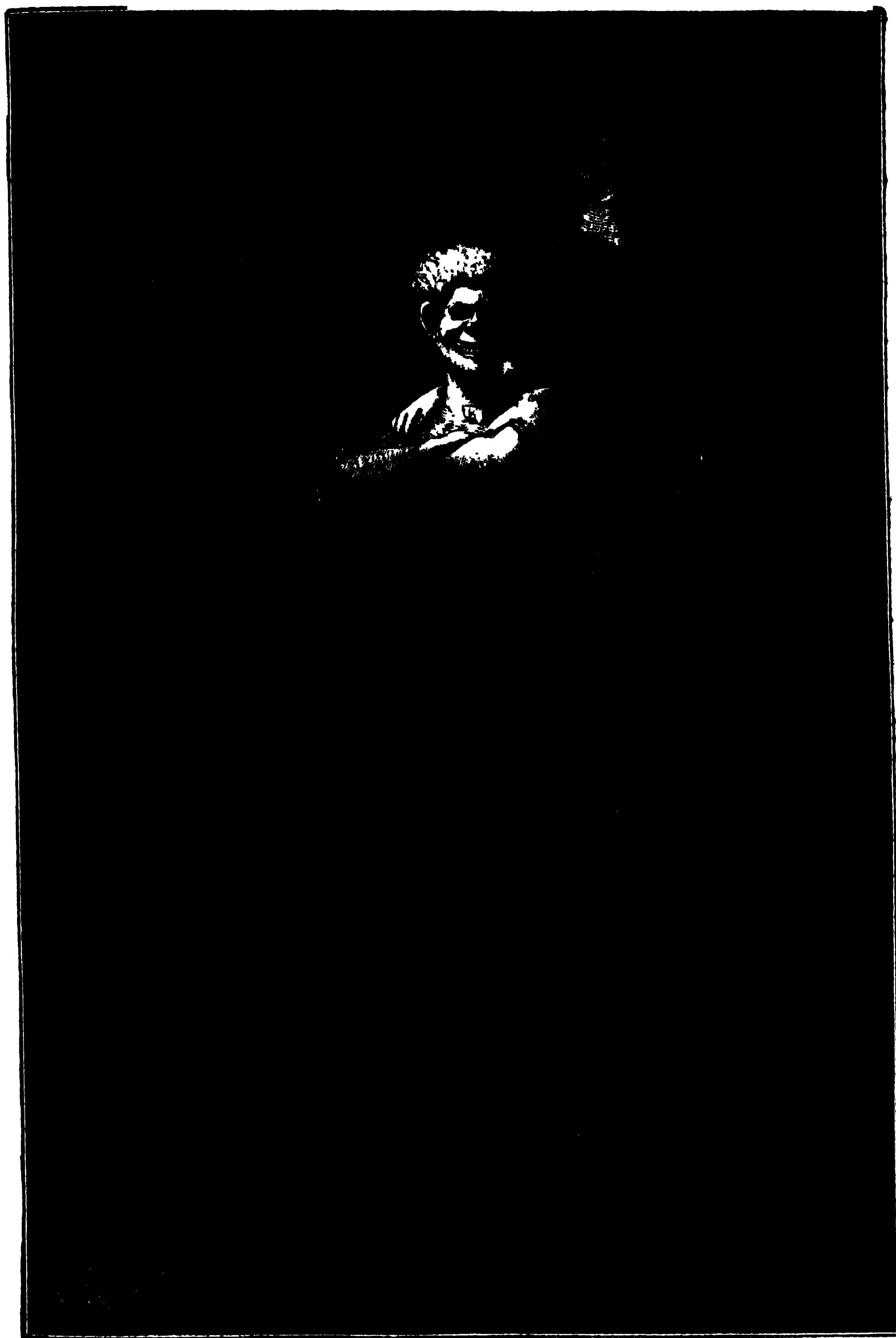
‡ O, come, and love! thou art soul, I am heart.

from which men do not fly, and that is the contagion of joy. The success, it must be admitted, did not rise higher than the populace. A great crowd means a crowd of nobodies. "Chaos Vanquished" could be seen for a penny. Fashionable people never go where the price of admission is a penny.

Ursus thought a good deal of his work, which he had brooded over for a long time. "It is in the style of one Shakespeare," he said, modestly.

The juxtaposition of Dea added to the indescribable effect produced by Gwynplaine. Her white face by the side of the gnome, represented what might have been called divine astonishment. The audience regarded Dea with a sort of mysterious anxiety. She had in her aspect the dignity of a virgin and of a priestess, not knowing man and knowing God. They saw that she was blind, and felt that she could see. She seemed to stand on the threshold of the supernatural. The light that beamed on her seemed half earthly and half heavenly. She had come to work on earth, and to work as heaven works, in the radiance of morning. Finding a hydra, she formed a soul. She seemed like a creative power, satisfied, but astonished at the result of her creation; and the audience fancied that they could see in the divine surprise of that face desire of the cause, and wonder at the result. They felt that she loved this monster. Did she know that he was one? Yes; since she touched him. No; since she accepted him. This depth of night and this glory of day united, formed in the mind of the spectator a chiaroscuro in which appeared endless perspectives. How much divinity exists in the germ, in what manner the penetration of the soul into matter is accomplished, how the solar ray is an umbilical cord, how the disfigured is transfigured, how the deformed becomes heavenly, all these glimpses of mysteries added an almost cosmical emotion to the convulsive hilarity produced by Gwynplaine. Without going too deep, for spectators do not like the fatigue of seeking below the surface, something more was understood than was perceived. And this strange spectacle had the transparency of an avatar.

As to Dea, what she felt cannot be expressed by human words; she knew that she was in the midst of a crowd, and knew not what a crowd was. She heard a murmur, that was all. For her the crowd was but a breath. Generations are passing breaths. Man respires, aspires, and expires. In that crowd Dea felt herself alone, and shuddering as one hanging over a precipice. Suddenly, in this trouble of innocence in distress, prompt to accuse the unknown, in her dread of a possible fall, Dea, serene notwithstanding, and superior to the vague agonies of peril, but inwardly shuddering at her isolation, found confidence and support.



"CHAOS VANQUISHED."

She had seized her thread of safety in the universe of shadows; she put her hand on the powerful head of Gwynplaine.

Joy unspeakable! she placed her rosy fingers on his forest of crisp hair. Wool when touched gives an impression of softness. Dea touched a lamb which she knew to be a lion. Her whole heart poured out an ineffable love. She felt out of danger, she had found her savior. The public believed that they saw the contrary. To the spectators the being loved was Gwynplaine, and the savior was Dea. What matters! thought Ursus, to whom the heart of Dea was visible. And Dea, reassured, consoled, and delighted, adored the angel whilst the people contemplated the monster, and endured, fascinated herself as well, though in the opposite sense, that dread Promethean laugh.

True love is never weary. Being all soul it cannot cool. A brasier comes to be full of cinders; not so a star. Her exquisite impressions were renewed every evening for Dea, and she was ready to weep with tenderness whilst the audience was in convulsions of laughter. Those around her were but joyful; she was happy.

The sensation of gayety due to the sudden shock caused by the rictus of Gwynplaine was evidently not intended by Ursus. He would have preferred more smiles and less laughter, and more of a literary triumph. But success consoles. He reconciled himself every evening to his excessive triumph, as he counted how many shillings the piles of farthings made, and how many pounds the piles of shillings, and besides, he said, after all, when the laugh had passed, "Chaos Vanquished" would be found in the depths of their minds, and something of it would remain there.

Perhaps he was not altogether wrong; the foundations of a work settle down in the mind of the public. The truth is, that this populace, attentive to the wolf, the bear, to the man, then to the music, to the howlings governed by harmony, to the night dissipated by dawn, to the chant releasing the light, accepted with a confused, dull sympathy, and with a certain emotional respect, the dramatic poem of "Chaos Vanquished," the victory of spirit over matter, ending with the joy of man.

Such were the vulgar pleasures of the people.

They sufficed them. The people had not the means of going to the noble matches of the gentry, and could not, like lords and gentlemen, bet a thousand guineas on Helmsgail against Phelem-ghe-Madone.

CHAPTER X

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF MEN AND THINGS



MAN has a notion of revenging himself on that which pleases him. Hence the contempt felt for the comedian.

This being charms me, diverts, distracts, teaches, enchants, consoles me, flings me into an ideal world, is agreeable and useful to me. What evil can I do him in return? Humiliate him. Disdain is a blow from afar. Let us strike the blow. He pleases me, therefore he is vile. He serves me, therefore I hate him. Where can I find a stone to throw at him? Priest, give me yours. Philosopher, give me yours. Bossuet, excommunicate him. Rousseau, insult him. Orator, spit the pebbles from your mouth at him. Bear, fling your stone. Let us cast stones at the tree, hit the fruit and eat it. Bravo! and down with him! To repeat poetry is to be infected with the plague. Wretched play-actor, we will put him in the pillory for his success. Let him follow up his triumph with our hisses. Let him collect a crowd, and create a solitude. Thus it is that the wealthy, termed the higher classes, have invented for the actor that form of isolation, applause.

The crowd is less brutal. They neither hated nor despised Gwynplaine. Only the meanest caulker of the meanest crew of the meanest merchantman, anchored in the meanest English sea-port, considered himself immeasurably superior to this amuser of the "scum," and believed that a caulker is as superior to an actor as a lord is to a caulker.

Gwynplaine was, therefore, like all comedians, applauded and kept at a distance. Truly, all success in this world is a crime, and must be expiated. He who obtains the medal has to take its reverse side as well.

For Gwynplaine there was no reverse. In this sense, both sides of

his medal pleased him. He was satisfied with the applause, and content with the isolation. In Applause, he was rich. In Isolation, happy.

To be rich in his low estate means to be no longer wretchedly poor, to have neither holes in his clothes, nor cold at his hearth, nor emptiness in his stomach. It is to eat when hungry, and drink when thirsty. It is to have everything necessary, including a penny for a beggar. This indigent wealth, enough for liberty, was possessed by Gwynplaine. So far as his soul was concerned, he was opulent. He had love. What more could he want? Nothing.

You may think that, had the offer been made to him to remove his deformity, he would have grasped at it. Yet he would have refused it emphatically. What! to throw off his mask and have his former face restored, to be the creature he had perchance been created, handsome and charming? No, he would never have consented to it. For what would he have to support Dea? what would have become of that poor child, the sweet blind girl who loved him? Without his rictus, which made him a clown without parallel, he would have been a mountebank, like any other; a common athlete, a picker up of pence from the chinks in the pavement, and Dea would, perhaps, not have had bread every day. It was with deep and tender pride that he felt himself the protector of the helpless and heavenly creature. Night, solitude, nakedness, weakness, ignorance, hunger, and thirst—seven yawning jaws of misery—were raised around her, and he was the St. George fighting the dragon. He triumphed over poverty. How? By his deformity. By his deformity he was useful, helpful, victorious, great. He had but to show himself, and money poured in. He was a master of crowds, the sovereign of the mob. He could do everything for Dea. Her wants he foresaw; her desires, her tastes, her fancies, in the limited sphere in which wishes are possible to the blind, he fulfilled. Gwynplaine and Dea were, as we have already shown, Providence to each other. He felt himself raised on her wings, she felt herself carried in his arms. To protect the being who loves you, to give what she requires to her who shines on you as your star, can anything be sweeter? Gwynplaine possessed this supreme happiness, and he owed it to his deformity. His deformity had raised him above all. By it he had gained the means of life for himself and others; by it he had gained independence, liberty, celebrity, internal satisfaction and pride. In his deformity he was inaccessible. The Fates could do nothing beyond this blow in which they had spent their whole force, and which he had turned into a triumph. This lowest depth of misfortune had become the summit of Elysium. Gwynplaine was imprisoned in his deformity, but with Dea. And this was, as we have already said, to live in a dungeon of paradise. A wall

stood between them and the living world. So much the better. This wall protected as well as enclosed them. What could affect Dea, what could affect Gwynplaine, with such a fortress around them? To take from him his success was impossible. They would have had to deprive him of his face. Take from him his love. Impossible! Dea could not see him. The blindness of Dea was divinely incurable. What harm did his deformity do Gwynplaine? None. What advantage did it give him? Every advantage. He was beloved, notwithstanding its horror, and, perhaps, for that very cause. Infirmity and deformity had by instinct been drawn towards and coupled with each other. To be beloved, is not that everything? Gwynplaine thought of his disfigurement only with gratitude. He was blessed in the stigma. With joy he felt that it was irremediable and eternal. What a blessing that it was so! While there were highways and fair-grounds, and journeys to take, the people below, and the sky above, they would be sure to live, Dea would want nothing, and they should have love. Gwynplaine would not have changed faces with Apollo. To be a monster was his form of happiness.

Thus, as we said before, destiny had given him all, even to overflowing. He who had been rejected had been preferred.

He was so happy that he felt compassion for the men around him. He pitied the rest of the world. It was, besides, his instinct to look about him, because no one is always consistent, and a man's nature is not always theoretic; he was delighted to live within an enclosure, but from time to time he lifted his head above the wall. Then he retreated again with more joy into his loneliness with Dea, having drawn his comparisons. What did he see around him?

What were those living creatures of which his wandering life showed him so many specimens, changed every day? Always new crowds, always the same multitude, ever new faces, ever the same miseries. A jumble of ruins. Every evening every phase of social misfortune came and encircled his happiness.

The Green Box was popular.

Low prices attract the low classes. Those who came were the weak, the poor, the little. They rushed to Gwynplaine as they rushed to gin. They came to buy a pennyworth of forgetfulness. From the height of his platform Gwynplaine passed those wretched people in review. His spirit was enwrapt in the contemplation of every succeeding apparition of wide-spread misery. The physiognomy of man is modeled by conscience, and by the tenor of life, and is the result of a crowd of mysterious excavations. There was never a suffering, not an anger, not a shame, not a despair, of which Gwynplaine did not see the wrinkle.

The mouths of those children had not eaten. That man was a father, that woman a mother, and behind them, their families might be guessed to be on the road to ruin. There was a face already marked by vice, on the threshold of crime, and the reasons were plain; ignorance and indigence. Another showed the stamp of original goodness, obliterated by social pressure, and turned to hate. On the face of an old woman he saw starvation. On that of a girl, prostitution. The same fact, and although the girl had the resource of her youth, all the sadder for that! In the crowd were arms without tools; the workers asked only for work, but the work was wanting. Sometimes a soldier came and seated himself by the workmen, sometimes a wounded pensioner; and Gwynplaine saw the spectre of war. Here Gwynplaine read want of work, there man-farming, slavery. On certain brows he saw an indescribable ebbing back towards animalism, and that slow return of man to beast, produced on those below by the dull pressure of the happiness of those above. There was a break in the gloom for Gwynplaine. He and Dea had a loop-hole of happiness; the rest was damnation. Gwynplaine felt above him the thoughtless trampling of the powerful, the rich, the magnificent, the great, the elect of chance. Below he saw the pale faces of the disinherited. He saw himself and Dea, with their little happiness, so great to themselves, between two worlds. That which was above went and came, free, joyous, dancing, trampling under foot; above him the world which treads, below the world which is trodden upon. It is a fatal fact, and one indicating a profound social evil, that light should crush the shadow! Gwynplaine thoroughly grasped this dark evil. What! a destiny so reptile! Shall a man drag himself thus along with such adherence to dust and corruption, with such vicious tastes, such an abdication of right, or such abjectness that one feels inclined to crush him under foot? Of what butterfly is, then, this earthly life the grub?

What! in the crowd which hungers and which denies everywhere, and before all, the questions of crime and shame (the inflexibility of the laws producing laxity of conscience), is there no child that grows but to be stunted, no virgin but matures for sin; no rose that blooms, but for the slime of the snail?

His eyes at times sought everywhere, with the curiosity of emotion, to probe the depths of that darkness, in which there died away so many useless efforts, and in which there struggled so much weariness: families devoured by society, morals tortured by the laws, wounds gangrened by penalties, poverty gnawed by taxes, wrecked intelligence swallowed up by ignorance, rafts in distress alive with the famished, feuds, dearth, death-rattles, cries, disappearances. He felt the vague oppression of a

keen, universal suffering. He saw the vision of the foaming wave of misery dashing over the crowd of humanity. He was safe in port himself, as he watched the wreck around him. Sometimes he laid his disfigured head in his hands and dreamed.

What folly to be happy! How one dreams! Ideas were born within him. Absurd notions crossed his brain.

Because formerly he had succored an infant, he felt a ridiculous desire to succor the whole world. The mists of reverie sometimes obscured his individuality, and he lost his ideas of proportion so far as to ask himself the question, "What can be done for the poor?" Sometimes he was so absorbed in his subject as to express it aloud. Then Ursus shrugged his shoulders and looked at him fixedly. Gwynplaine continued his reverie.

"Oh! were I powerful, would I not aid the wretched? But what am I?—An atom. What can I do?—Nothing."

He was mistaken. He was able to do a great deal for the wretched. He could make them laugh; and, as we have said, to make people laugh is to make them forget.

What a benefactor on earth is he who can bestow forgetfulness!

CHAPTER XI

GWYNPLAINE THINKS JUSTICE, AND URSUS TALKS TRUTH



A PHILOSOPHER is a spy. Ursus, a watcher of dreams, studied his pupil.

Our monologues leave on our brows a faint reflection, distinguishable to the eye of a physiognomist. Hence, what occurred to Gwynplaine did not escape Ursus. One day as Gwynplaine was meditating, Ursus pulled him by his jacket, and exclaimed:

"You strike me as being an observer! You fool! Take care. It is no business of yours. You have one thing to do—to love Dea. You have two causes of happiness—the first is, that the crowd sees your

muzzle; the second is, that Dea does not. You have no right to the happiness you possess, for no woman who saw your mouth would consent to your kiss; and that mouth which has made your fortune, and that face, which has given you riches, is not your own. You were not born with that countenance. It was borrowed from the grimace which is at the bottom of the infinite. You have stolen your mask from the devil. You are hideous; be satisfied with having drawn that prize in the lottery. There are in this world (and a very good thing too) the happy by right, and the happy by luck. You are happy by luck. You are in a cave wherein a star is enclosed. The poor star belongs to you. Do not seek to leave the cave, and guard your star, O spider! You have in your web the carbuncle, Venus. Do me the favor to be satisfied. I see your dreams are troubled. It is idiotic of you. Listen, I am going to speak to you in the language of true poetry. Let Dea eat beefsteaks and mutton-chops, and in six months she will be as strong as a Turk; marry her immediately, give her a child, two children, three children, a long string of children. That is what I call philosophy. Moreover, it is happiness, which is no folly. To have children is a glimpse of heaven. Have brats—wipe them, blow their noses, dirt them, wash them, and put them to bed. Let them swarm about you. If they laugh, it is well; if they howl, it is better—to cry is to live. Watch them suck at six months, crawl at a year, walk at two, grow tall at fifteen, fall in love at twenty. He who has these joys has everything. For myself, I lacked the advantage; and that is the reason why I am a brute. God, a composer of beautiful poems and the first of men of letters, said to his fellow-workman, Moses: 'Increase and multiply.' Such is the text. Multiply, you beast! As to the world, it is as it is; you cannot make nor mar it. Do not trouble yourself about it. Pay no attention to what goes on outside. Leave the horizon alone. A comedian is made to be looked at, not to look. Do you know what there is outside? The happy, by right. You, I repeat, are the happy by chance. You are the pickpocket of the happiness of which they are the proprietors. They are the legitimate possessors; you are the intruder. You live in concubinage with luck. What do you want that you have not already? Shibboleth help me! This fellow is a rascal. To multiply himself by Dea would be pleasant, all the same. Such happiness is like a swindle. Those above who possess happiness by privilege, do not like folks below them to have so much enjoyment. If they ask you what right you have to be happy, you will not know what to answer. You have no patent, and they have. Jupiter, Allah, Vishnou, Sabaoth, it does not matter who, has given them the passport to happiness. Fear them. Do not meddle with them, lest they should meddle with you.

Wretch! do you know what the man is who is happy by right? He is a terrible being. He is a lord. A lord! He must have intrigued pretty well in the devil's unknown country before he was born, to enter life by the door he did. How difficult it must have been to him to be born! It is the only trouble he has given himself; but, just heaven, what a one!—to obtain from destiny, the blind blockhead, to mark him in his cradle a master of men. To bribe the box-keeper, to give him the best place at the show. Read the memoranda in the old hut, which I have placed on half-pay. Read that breviary of my wisdom, and you will see what it is to be a lord. A lord is one who has all, and is all. A lord is one who exists above his own nature. A lord is one who has when young the rights of an old man; when old, the success in intrigue of a young one; if vicious, the homage of respectable people; if a coward, the command of brave men; if a do-nothing, the fruits of labor; if ignorant, the diploma of Cambridge or Oxford; if a fool, the admiration of poets; if ugly, the smiles of women; if a Thersites, the helm of Achilles; if a hare, the skin of a lion. Do not misunderstand my words. I do not say that a lord must necessarily be ignorant, a coward, ugly, stupid, or old. I only mean that he may be all those things without any detriment to himself. On the contrary. Lords are princes. The king of England is only a lord, the first peer of the peerage; that is all, but it is much. Kings were formerly called lords—the Lord of Denmark, the Lord of Ireland, the Lord of the Isles. The Lord of Norway was first called king three hundred years ago. Lucius, the most ancient king in England, was spoken to by Saint Telesphorus as my Lord Lucius. The lords are peers—that is to say, equals—of whom?—Of the king. I do not commit the mistake of confounding the lords with parliament. The assembly of the people which the Saxons before the Conquest called *wittenagemote*, the Normans, after the Conquest, entitled *parliamentum*. By degrees the people were turned out. The king's letters clause convoking the Commons, addressed formerly *ad concilium impendendum*, are now addressed *ad consentiendum*. To say Yes is their liberty. The peers can say No; and the proof is that they have said it. The peers can cut off the king's head. The people cannot. The stroke of the hatchet which decapitated Charles I. is an encroachment, not on the king, but on the peers, and it was well to place on the gibbet the carcass of Cromwell. The lords have power. Why? Because they have riches. Who has turned over the leaves of the Doomsday-book? It is the proof that the lords possess England. It is the registry of the estates of subjects, compiled under William the Conqueror; and it is in the charge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To copy anything in it, you have to pay twopence a line. It is a proud book. Do you know

that I was domestic doctor to a lord, who was called Marmaduke, and who had thirty-six thousand a year? Think of that, you hideous idiot! Do you know that, with rabbits only from the warrens of Earl Lindsay, they could feed all the riff-raff of the Cinque Ports? And the good order kept! Every poacher is hung. For two long, furry ears sticking out of a game-bag, I saw the father of six children hanging on the gibbet. Such is the peerage. The rabbit of a great lord is of more importance than God's image in a man.

"Lords exist, you trespasser, do you see? and we must think it good that they do; and even if we do not, what harm will it do them? The people object, indeed! Why? Plautus himself would never have attained the comicality of such an idea. A philosopher would be jesting if he advised the poor devil of the masses to cry out against the size and weight of the lords. Just as well might the gnat dispute with the foot of an elephant. One day I saw a hippopotamus tread upon a mole-hill; he crushed it utterly. He was innocent. The great soft-headed fool of a mastodon did not even know of the existence of moles. My son, the moles that are trodden on are the human race. To crush is a law. And do you think that the mole himself crushes nothing? Why, it is the mastodon of the flesh-worm, who is the mastodon of the globe-worm. But let us cease arguing. My boy, there are coaches in the world; my lord is inside, the people under the wheels; the philosopher gets out of the way. Stand aside, and let them pass. As to myself, I love lords, and shun them. I lived with one; the beauty of my recollections suffices me. I remember his country house, like a glory in a cloud. My dreams are all retrospective. Nothing could be more admirable than Marmaduke Lodge in grandeur, beautiful symmetry, rich avenues, and the ornaments and surroundings of the edifice. The houses, country seats, and palaces of the lords present a selection of all that is greatest and most magnificent in this flourishing kingdom. I love our lords. I thank them for being opulent, powerful, and prosperous. I myself am clothed in shadow, and I look with interest upon the shred of heavenly blue which is called a lord. You enter Marmaduke Lodge by an exceedingly spacious court-yard, which forms an oblong square, divided into eight spaces, each surrounded by a balustrade; on each side is a wide approach, and a superb hexagonal fountain plays in the midst; this fountain is formed of two basins, which are surmounted by a dome of exquisite open-work, elevated on six columns. It was there that I knew a learned Frenchman, Monsieur l'Abbé du Cros, who belonged to the Jacobin monastery in the Rue Saint Jacques. Half the library of Erpenius is at Marmaduke Lodge, the other half being at the theological schools at Cambridge. I used to read the books, seated under

the ornamented portal. These things are only shown to a select number of curious travelers. Do you know, you ridiculous boy, that William North, who is Lord Grey of Rolleston, and sits fourteenth on the bench of Barons, has more forest trees on his mountains than you have hairs on your horrible noddle? Do you know that Lord Norreys of Rycote, who is Earl of Abingdon, has a square keep a hundred feet high, having this device: *Virtus ariete fortior;* which you would think meant that virtue is stronger than a ram, but which really means, you idiot, that courage is stronger than a battering-machine. Yes, I honor, accept, respect, and revere our lords. It is the lords who, with her royal majesty, work to procure and preserve the advantages of the nation. Their consummate wisdom shines in intricate junctures. Their precedence over others I wish they had not; but they have it. What is called principality in Germany, grandeeship in Spain, is called peerage in England and France. There being a fair show of reason for considering the world a wretched place enough, heaven felt where the burden was most galling, and to prove that it knew how to make happy people, created lords for the satisfaction of philosophers. This acts as a set-off, and gets heaven out of the scrape, affording it a decent escape from a false position. The great are great. A peer, speaking of himself, says *we*. A peer is a plural. The king qualifies the peer *consanguinei nostri*. The peers have made a multitude of wise laws; amongst others, one which condemns to death any one who cuts down a three-year-old poplar tree. Their supremacy is such that they have a language of their own. In heraldic style, black, which is called *sable* for gentry, is called *saturne* for princes, and *diamond* for peers. Diamond dust, a night thick with stars, such is the night of the happy! Even amongst themselves these high and mighty lords have their own distinctions. A baron cannot wash with a viscount, without his permission. These are indeed excellent things, and safeguards to the nation. What a fine thing it is for the people to have twenty-five dukes, five marquises, seventy-six earls, nine viscounts, and sixty-one barons; making altogether a hundred and seventy-six peers, of which some are your grace, and some my lord. What matter a few rags here and there, withal: everybody cannot be dressed in gold. Let the rags be. Cannot you see the purple? One balances the other. A thing must be built of something. Yes, of course, there are the poor—what of them! They line the happiness of the wealthy. Devil take it! our lords are our glory! The pack of hounds belonging to Charles, Baron Mohun, costs him as much as the hospital for lepers in Moorgate, and for Christ's Hospital, founded for children, in 1553, by Edward VI. Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, spends yearly on his liveries five thousand golden guineas.

The Spanish grandees have a guardian appointed by law to prevent their ruining themselves. That is cowardly. Our lords are extravagant and magnificent. I esteem them for it. Let us not abuse them like envious folks. I feel happy when a beautiful vision passes. I have not the light, but I have the reflection. A reflection thrown on my ulcer, you will say. Go to the devil! I am a Job, delighted in the contemplation of Trimalcion. Oh, that beautiful and radiant planet up there! But the moonlight is something. To suppress the lords was an idea which Orestes, mad as he was, would not have dared to entertain. To say that the lords are mischievous or useless, is as much as to say that the state should be revolutionized, and that men are not made to live like cattle, browsing the grass and bitten by the dog. The field is shorn by the sheep, the sheep by the shepherd. It is all one to me. I am a philosopher, and I care about life as much as a fly. Life is but a lodging. When I think that Henry Bowes Howard, Earl of Berkshire, has in his stable twenty-four state carriages, of which one is mounted in silver, and another in gold,—good heavens! I know that every one has not got twenty-four state carriages; but there is no need to complain for all that. Because you were cold one night, what was that to him? It concerns you only. Others besides you suffer cold and hunger. Don't you know that without that cold, Dea would not have been blind, and if Dea were not blind she would not love you? Think of that, you fool! And, besides, if all the people who are lost, were to complain, there would be a pretty tumult! Silence is the rule. I have no doubt that heaven imposes silence on the damned, otherwise heaven itself would be punished by their everlasting cry. The happiness of Olympus is bought by the silence of Cocytus. Then, people! be silent! I do better myself; I approve and admire. Just now I was enumerating the lords, and I ought to add to the list two archbishops and twenty-four bishops. Truly, I am quite affected when I think of it! I remember to have seen at the tithe-gathering of the Rev. Dean of Raphoe, who combined the peerage with the church, a great tithe of beautiful wheat taken from the peasants in the neighborhood, and which the dean had not been at the trouble of growing. This left him time to say his prayers. Do you know that Lord Marmaduke, my master, was Lord Grand Treasurer of Ireland, and High Seneschal of the sovereignty of Knaresborough in the county of York? Do you know that the Lord High Chamberlain, which is an office hereditary in the family of the Dukes of Ancaster, dresses the king for his coronation, and receives for his trouble forty yards of crimson velvet, besides the bed on which the king has slept; and that the Usher of the Black Rod is his deputy? I should like to see you deny this, that the senior viscount of England is

Robert Brent, created a viscount by Henry V. The lords' titles imply sovereignty over land, except that of Earl Rivers, who takes his title from his family name. How admirable is the right which they have to tax others, and to levy, for instance, four shillings in the pound sterling income-tax, which has just been continued for another year. And all the fine taxes on distilled spirits, on the excise of wine and beer, on tonnage and poundage, on cider, on perry, on mum, malt, and prepared barley, on coals, and on a hundred things besides. Let us venerate things as they are. The clergy themselves depend on the lords. The Bishop of Man is subject to the Earl of Derby. The lords have wild beasts of their own, which they place in their armorial bearings. God not having made enough, they have invented others. They have created the heraldic wild boar, who is as much above the wild boar as the wild boar is above the domestic pig, and the lord is above the priest. They have created the griffin, which is an eagle to lions, and a lion to eagles, terrifying lions by his wings, and eagles by his mane. They have the guivre, the unicorn, the serpent, the salamander, the tarask, the dree, the dragon, and the hippogriff. All these things, terrible to us, are to them but an ornament and an embellishment. They have a menagerie which they call the blazon, in which unknown beasts roar. The prodigies of the forest are nothing compared to the inventions of their pride. Their vanity is full of phantoms which move as in a sublime night, armed with helm and cuirass, spurs on their heels and the sceptres in their hands, saying in a grave voice, 'We are the ancestors!' The canker-worms eat the roots, and panoplies eat the people. Why not? Are we to change the laws? The peerage is part of the order of society. Do you know that there is a duke in Scotland who can ride ninety miles without leaving his own estate? Do you know that the Archbishop of Canterbury has a revenue of 40,000*l.* a year? Do you know that her majesty has 700,000*l.* sterling from the civil list, besides castles, forests, domains, fiefs, tenancies, freeholds, prebendaries, tithes, rent, confiscations, and fines, which bring in over a million sterling? Those who are not satisfied are hard to please."

"Yes," murmured Gwynplaine, sadly; "the paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor."

CHAPTER XII

URSUS THE POET DRAGS ON URSUS THE PHILOSOPHER

THEN Dea entered. He looked at her, and saw nothing but her. This is love; one may be carried away for a moment by the importunity of some other idea, but the beloved one enters, and all that does not appertain to her presence immediately fades away, without her dreaming that perhaps she is effacing in us a world.

Let us mention a circumstance. In "Chaos Vanquished," the word *monstro*, addressed to Gwynplaine, displeased Dea. Sometimes, with the smattering of Spanish, which every one knew at the period, she took it into her head to replace it by *quiero*, which signifies, *I wish it*. Ursus tolerated, although not without an expression of impatience, this alteration in his text. He might have said to Dea, as in our day Moessard said to Vissot, *Tu manques de respect au repertoire.*

"The Laughing Man."

Such was the form of Gwynplaine's fame. His name, Gwynplaine, little known at any time, had disappeared under his nickname, as his face had disappeared under its grin.

His popularity was like his visage—a mask.

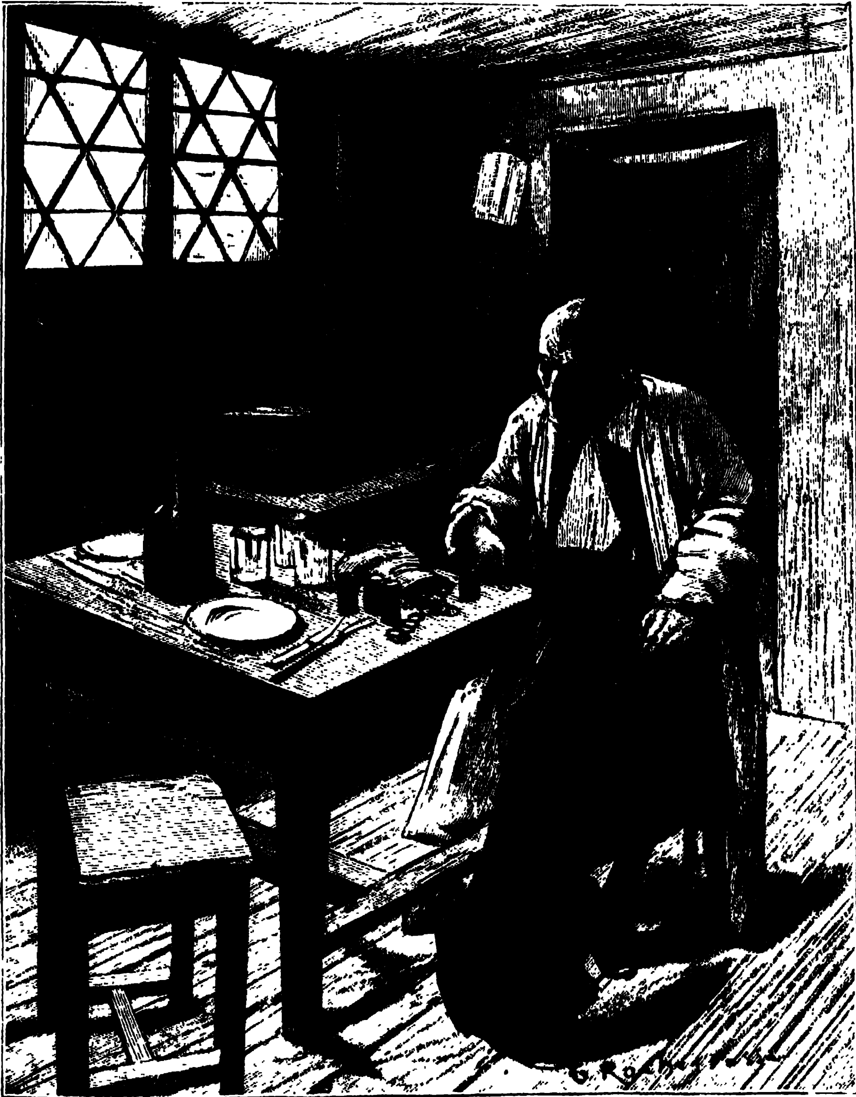
His name, however, was to be read on a large placard in front of the Green Box, which offered the crowd the following narrative composed by Ursus:

"Here is to be seen Gwynplaine, who was deserted at the age of ten, on the night of the 29th of January, 1690, by the villainous Comprachicos, on the coast of Portland. The little boy has grown up, and is called now:

"THE LAUGHING MAN."

The existence of these mountebanks was as an existence of lepers in a leper-house, and of the blessed in one of the Pleiades. There was every

day a sudden transition from the noisy exhibition outside, into the most complete seclusion. Every evening they made their exit from this world. They were like the dead, vanishing on condition of being re-born next day.



A comedian is a revolving light, appearing one moment, disappearing the next, and existing for the public but as a phantom or a light, as his life circles round. To exhibition succeeded isolation. When the performance was finished, whilst the audience were dispersing, and

their murmur of satisfaction was dying away in the streets, the Green Box shut up its platform, as a fortress does its draw-bridge, and all communication with mankind was cut off. On one side, the universe; on the other, the caravan; and this caravan contained liberty, clear consciences, courage, devotion, innocence, happiness, love—all the constellations.

Blindness having sight and deformity beloved, sat side by side—hand pressing hand, brow touching brow, and whispered to each other, intoxicated with love.

The compartment in the middle served two purposes—for the public it was a stage, for the actors a dining-room.

Ursus, ever delighting in comparisons, profited by the diversity of its uses to liken the central compartment in the Green Box to the arradach in an Abyssinian hut.

Ursus counted the receipts, then they supped. In love all is ideal. In love, eating and drinking together afford opportunities for many sweet promiscuous touches, by which a mouthful becomes a kiss. They drank ale or wine from the same glass, as they might drink dew out of the same lily. Two souls in love are as full of grace as two birds. Gwynplaine waited on Dea, cut her bread, poured out her drink, approached her too close.

"Hum!" cried Ursus, and he turned away, his scolding melting into a smile.

The wolf supped under the table, heedless of everything which did actually not concern his bone.

Fibi and Vinos shared the repast, but gave little trouble. These vagabonds, half wild and as uncouth as ever, spoke in the gypsy language to each other.

At length Dea re-entered the women's apartment with Fibi and Vinos. Ursus chained up Homo under the Green Box; Gwynplaine looked after the horses, the lover becoming a groom, like a hero of Homer's or a paladin of Charlemagne's. At midnight all were asleep, except the wolf, who, alive to his responsibility, now and then opened an eye.

The next morning, they met again. They breakfasted together, generally on ham and tea. Tea was introduced into England in 1668. Then Dea, after the Spanish fashion, took a siesta, acting on the advice of Ursus, who considered her delicate, and slept some hours, while Gwynplaine and Ursus did all the little jobs of work, without and within, which their wandering life made necessary.

Gwynplaine rarely wandered away from the Green Box, except on unfrequented roads and in solitary places. In cities he went out only

at night, disguised in a large slouched hat, so as not to exhibit his face in the street.

His face was to be seen uncovered only on the stage.

The Green Box had frequented cities but little. Gwynplaine at twenty-four had never seen towns larger than the Cinque Ports. His renown, however, was increasing. It began to rise above the populace, and to percolate through higher ground. Amongst those who were fond of, and ran after, strange foreign curiosities and prodigies, it was known that there was somewhere in existence, leading a wandering life, now here, now there, an extraordinary monster. They talked about him, they sought him, they asked where he was? The laughing man was becoming decidedly famous. A certain lustre was reflected on "Chaos Vanquished."

So much so, that, one day, Ursus, being ambitious, said:

"We must go to London."

END OF VOLUME I.

